DAZZLING DREAMS, DAWNING REALITY: THE UNHOLY ALLIANCE OF SPORTS PERFORMANCE AND EDUCATION FOR APPRENTICE GOLFERS IN AN ACADEMY STRUCTURE

by

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ABSTRACT

This research followed the journey and experiences of twenty-four apprentice golfers on an academy programme of sports performance and education delivered via a college-based system in England. Apprentice golfers were followed through a two-year programme linked to the England talent pathway, with the intended outcome of propelling them on a journey of golfing achievement, but with the back up of academic qualifications. A key aim of this piece of work was to understand the expectations of the apprentice golfers on joining the programme and to trace how these, as well as anticipated exit routes from the programme, developed and were shaped by their experiences. There are innumerable factors that mediate the journey of individuals through sport, and it is clear that this development is not experienced in a linear fashion (Bailey et al 2010). The study was carried out from an interpretivist standpoint, using an ethnographic approach, in an attempt to narrate the story and journey of the participants. A grounded theory approach (Glaser and Strauss 1979) was then used in the development of common themes that were considered in the light of existing empirical data. Four particular areas were explored throughout to help understand and depict the journey of these golfers. The factors examined here were classified as 'talent system', 'luck', 'critical episodes' and 'personal outlook'. Identified themes included the appearance of many and varied communities of practice (Lave and Wenger 2006) with two distinct groups emerging: 'Players' valued the physical capital of sporting performance that the programme offered, whereas 'Scholars' valued educational elements and the associated cultural capital therein. During the field work these two cohorts became estranged from each other, becoming more and more polarised as time went by. The programme was designed for late specialisers but in reality they had no means by which to progress to the next stage of the England talent pathway; as such the programme was fatally flawed and was never going to be able to meet its stated objective. The lack of success of the programme brings into question the value of such an enterprise and leads one to conclude that this programme was designed and implemented with a view to securing funding instead of having the best interests of the apprentice golfers and talent development at heart.

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1.1 Chapter Introduction

In the field of competitive sport there is often the promise of fame and fortune on offer for aspiring athletes. As well as huge financial rewards, elite sport attracts enormous publicity and media attention that often means successful athletes live lives befitting of celebratory idols (McGillivray et al 2005). This highly attractive package of benefits is sold to young people which results in them investing the majority of their time training, practising and, they hope, working towards a career in playing professional sport – 'making it' (Coakley and Pike 2014). However, the reality of the situation is that only the very few will go on to achieve this outcome. There are large numbers of young people who will not make it to professional sport and for these individuals they face a harsh reality that they have neglected their education and so will "face major obstacles in reintegrating into society and starting a new professional career" (David 2005; 146).

The purpose of this research was to follow a group of young golfers through the Advanced Apprenticeship in Sporting Excellence (AASE) in Golf, to understand their expectations and experiences and to monitor their outcomes. Apprentice golfers were followed through this programme (which formed part of the England talent pathway for golf), over an extended period of time, from recruitment into the programme, all the way through to graduation from the course and beyond.

1.2 Theoretical and conceptual outline

The AASE programme as delivered by 'Mid-Town College' (a pseudonym) was the subject of this research, but there was a particular focus on coaching delivery. Social and interactional perspectives have been not been investigated or acknowledged in any great detail within coaching research and it has been identified that within sports coaching there needs to be a greater understanding about the 'how' of coaching (Potrac and Jones 1999, Jones et al 2002, Purdy et al 2008, Mathews et al 2013). This is especially true of golf where, historically, much more attention has been focused on technical issues, the 'what' of coaching. However, there is a growing awareness that coaches need to understand why people take up, and continue to play, sport (North 2007; Bailey et al 2010). An appreciation of these perspectives can help coaches to work more effectively and in so doing, encourage participants to be retained in the sport and meet their potential by attending to their individual wants and needs.

1.2.1 Golf in England

In England the game of golf for amateur players is governed by England Golf, which came into existence in its current form in January 2012 (England Golf 2014). The new organisation was formed following a merger between the existing English Golf Union (EGU), which governed the men's game, and the English Women's Golf Association (EWGA), which governed the women's game. At the time this research was carried out, the merger was yet to happen and the intervention under investigation, AASE, was jointly run by the EGU and EWGA.

The remit of both the EGU and EWGA was similar: to govern amateur players and issue them with handicaps, run championships, support golf clubs and to develop talent. Historically the main source of income for EGU and EWGA was through a levy that each golf club member would pay through their golf club. These funds would then be passed on by the County Men's Union or Women's Association to the national body. In recent years the function of the EGU and EWGA has extended following the formation of the England Golf Partnership (EGP) and now includes golf development work. The EGP was initially made up of the EGU, EWGA, Golf Foundation and Professional Golfers Association (PGA). More recently the partnership has been made up of two voting members, England Golf and the PGA. The EGP was formed in order to access government funding through Sport England for the development of the game of golf. To access funding, sports' governing bodies were required to write a 'Whole Sport Plan' which outlined the details of proposed developments. The first Whole Sport Plan for golf covered the period 2005-2009 and the EGP accessed £10M from Sport England. Whole Sport Plan II covered the period 2009-2013, and £16.3M was received, Whole Sport Plan III covering the period 2013-2017 secured the promise of £13.5M from Sport England over the four year period. These funding streams have led to a number of new initiatives as well as the funding of existing development work with the aim of driving up participation and improving the performance of talented amateur golfers. However, these activities, and the funding they have attracted, have failed to arrest a slump in participation. Since 2000, membership of golf clubs has fallen from 874,447 to 744,165 in 2012 (England Golf 2013). As a direct consequence, funding from Sport England was cut.

These Whole Sport Plans all included elements that developed the area of 'talent'. In golf this is defined as playing to an elite amateur level and therefore falls under the funding discretion of Sport England and the management of the amateur bodies. The England talent pathway is

the system that EGU/EWGA put in place to support the development of young golfers in England. The 2009 version of this pathway can be seen in Appendix 1 and includes the AASE programme being studied here (an updated talent pathway, for 2013-17, can be found in Appendix 2).

The exit route for successful players in the England talent pathway is to play as a professional golfer. Once a player turns professional, they are essentially self sufficient and there is no central system to support them - golf receives no funding from UK Sport, the body that has the remit to fund this level of performance. However, these individuals can now play for money (something they are not permitted to do as amateurs) and attempt to make their way to the upper echelons of golf performance where there are high levels of reward in terms of prize money and sponsorship. It is the lure of these rewards that entices many young golfers to dream of a career playing on the lucrative European or American based tours and in so doing to 'make it'.

1.2.2 AASE in Golf

The AASE programme was created in 2004 by Skills Active along with national governing bodies of sport and other 'experts' to support young athletes (aged 16-19 years) to perform at the highest level (Skills Active 2014a). The AASE programme was operated by over twenty sports, and historically, several thousand young people have participated in the scheme. Although called apprenticeships these programmes do not fall within the classic definition of this term. An apprenticeship "requires a job, which requires an employer, but it is still a form of education, which implies that a key beneficiary is the apprentice and that as a society we have an obligation to support its delivery" (Richard 2012; 3). It is contentious to suggest that

developing young athletes via apprenticeships is beneficial to society and that government funding should be directed to such activity. Richard goes on to say that "there has been a drift toward calling many things apprenticeships which in fact, are not...an apprenticeship without a job is a form of vocational training" (Richard 2012; 4). Perhaps this is not important as long as it is clear what AASE is: "a structured training and development route across a number of sports for talented young athletes who have a real chance of excelling in their sport; either by competing on the world stage or securing a professional contract" (Skills Active 2014b).

AASE in Golf was delivered under the auspices of the amateur bodies in golf throughout England in further education (FE) colleges and was government funded through Skills Active. The purpose of the programme was two-fold according to Skills Active (2014a): to support top young athletes seeking to perform at the highest level and to provide the skills knowledge and qualifications to pursue a different career path if an athlete fell short of their ultimate goal. In the example detailed in this research, apprentice golfers studied for a period of two years based at Mid-Town College a further education college in England. The golf elements of the course were based at 'Bridge Golf Club' (a pseudonym).

Colleges were required to bid to an assessment panel to become accredited deliverers of the AASE programme and were awarded a limited number of places for students depending on factors such as the colleges' ability to deliver the programme and their previous performance. The assessment panel was made up of representatives of the EGU and EWGA and a representative of Skills Active. The number of individual places that each college was allocated therefore set an upper limit on the amount of funding that an individual college could access from Skills Active. It should also be noted that EGU/EWGA also received funding from Skills Active based on the total number of students on the programme

nationally. The programme was aimed at "supporting apprentice golfers (between 16 and 19 years of age) who had the realistic potential to achieve excellence in their sport and were seeking to perform at the highest level as their main career goal" (EGU/EWGA 2011; 2). At the time this research was undertaken, the AASE programme was delivered at twelve colleges across England.

The AASE programme was a vocational qualification and, as such, was based around sports performance and education that necessitated the use of multiple locations, that is, sports facilities and colleges. Students undertook BTEC (level 3) studies three days a week and sport specific activity for two days a week, in this case competition on Wednesdays, coaching and practice on Fridays. This AASE course was tailored to be golf specific as opposed to generic. On this basis even during lessons, the students were supposed to be developing their golf-specific knowledge to enable them to gain a further understanding of what they need to do to improve their performance levels. For example, within the individual sport unit students learnt about the technical and tactical demands of golf as opposed to sport generically. The EGU/EWGA saw AASE as a way of nurturing these apprentice golfers, providing them some educational opportunities whilst supporting their desire to make it to professional ranks.

Mid-Town College (2008; 3), where this study was based, state that the mission of the programme at their college was to "support young golfers who have the realistic potential to achieve excellence in their sport and are seeking to perform at the highest level as their main career goal". Interestingly though, Mid-Town College (2008; 3) also say that "in addition to preparing apprentices for possible careers as golf players of the future, the programme acts as a first step into a range of alternative careers including golf club professional, golf referees, personal trainers, golf coaches and caddies". In this way the marketing material sought to

appeal to potential apprentice golfers by emphasising the performance route, while also appealing to the parents of students by highlighting the educational elements that may open up alternative career pathways.

1.2.3 Education, sport and academies

Academies in many sports, particularly football, have sought to attract young people to them with the promise of sporting achievement, but there are few notable successes. By their very nature, the academy approach has encouraged young people to specialise in their sport early, spending more and more time in that single sport. Early specialisation in golf is problematic as it is considered a late specialisation sport and the benefits of continuing in multi sports are thought to be advantageous (Toms and Colclough 2012). One of the aims of this research was to identify if the apprentice golfers fell into an early or late specialisation category and how this affected their progression to the next stage of the England talent pathway.

Many academies are offering courses that encompass sport and education yet these two areas are not obvious bedfellows. This marriage of sport and education may have appeared for a number of reasons. From a positive point of view this could be viewed as a sensible approach as the nature of talent pathways means there are fewer and fewer participants at each incremental stage meaning that a great number of young people will drop out, so some degree of education to fall back on seems like a good idea. From a more cynical point of view, the educational element of the academy offer could be said to appeal to the parents of the young participants who may be reassured by its presence and more willing to agree that attendance at an academy is a good idea.

1.2.4 Theoretical outline: communities of practice

The theoretical anchor for this thesis is that of 'communities of practice', a concept established and developed by Lave and Wenger (Lave and Wenger 1991 and latterly Wenger et al 2002, Wenger 2005, Lave and Wenger 2006, Wenger 2008). Lave and Wenger (1991; 29) state that the original intention with this work was to "rescue the idea of apprenticeship" which had become a wide-ranging catch-all term for learning. In developing and clarifying their concept, Wenger (2008; 1) asserts, "Communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly". The young golfers involved in this research were studying for an Advanced Apprenticeship in Sporting Excellence and had a shared passion for playing golf. The programme of education and sports performance followed by these apprentice golfers involved both educational delivery within a college setting, and squad based training and coaching based at a golf facility. Within these two environments, apprentice golfers were working within the auspices of a group environment. Wenger (2005) suggests that participating (with a wide ranging meaning) in the practices of a community, and developing identities in relation to these shapes what we do, who we are and how we interpret what we do. Within this thesis, these perspectives are applied to the apprentice golfers whose identity and behaviours was shaped by their environment and experiences.

Wenger (2008; 3) argues that rather than the historical paradigm of learning being seen as an individual pursuit, we should adopt an approach where learning is placed "in the context of lived experience of participation in the world". Wenger (2008) goes on to ask, if we assume learning is a social phenomenon, then how might this learning take place, and what mechanisms are needed to support it? In answering these questions, Wenger seeks to propose

and further the theory of learning framed as 'communities of practice' situated in a particular context. This approach seems to align well with the emerging theory that coaching is a social practice: Armour (2004; 106) believes that "coaching is essentially a social practice created in the interaction of coaches, athletes and the club". Using this approach is thought to be a legitimate way to examine issues in sports settings (Galipeau and Trudel 2006) and there are a number of studies in sport that use a communities of practice framework. As such, this thesis uses the concept of communities of practice and legitimate peripheral participation to help to understand the situated learning of apprentice golfers within this research context.

1.3 Methodological outline

This research was carried out over an extended period, covering the two year period of the AASE course, but I also attended part of the selection process of the programme before it formally began and also followed several of the apprentice golfers after they had finished the course, to monitor their post-AASE journey. As well as following the twenty-four apprentice golfers, I was able to observe and interact with the two golf coaches, members of the college staff and others. This required a qualitative approach and an ethnographic methodology was used in order to follow the convention of similar research in this area, but also to allow a rich understanding to emerge. The research was carried out from an interpretivist standpoint using semi-structured interviews and observation in an attempt to explain the story and journey of the participants as fully as possible. A grounded theory approach (Glaser and Strauss 1979) was then used to analyse data and the development of emerging themes were considered in the light of existing empirical data.

1.4 Research questions

Although the overarching question was decided at the outset, supplementary questions were developed during the research process. The research questions are detailed below starting with the overarching question:

Research question 1 - What are the participants' expectations, experiences and outcomes of AASE in Golf?

What is the narrative of the participants' journey through AASE in golf?

- What are the expectations of the apprentice golfers before during and after the course and how does this journey change their perspectives?
- What are the experiences of these apprentice golfers during the golf elements of the course?
- How do the golf coaches and college staff members encounter the process?
- What is next for the students, the exit routes, and are these in line with expectations at the start of the course?

Research question 2 - To what extent is there a community of practice within AASE?

- Do the young golfers collectively act as a community of practice?
- Are there separate communities within the apprentice golfers?
- Do the coaches act as a community of practice?
- Do apprentice golfers and coaches act as a collective community of practice during the golf lessons?

Research question 3 – What is the narrative of the golf coaching delivered by the programme?

Coach recruitment

- How are the coaches selected by the college?
- What impact does this process have on what is delivered?

The Coaches

- How have the coaches arrived at where they are now; what has been their coaching journey?
- What styles of delivery do they use in their coaching practice?

Participants' view of the coaching

- How do the participants experience the delivery styles of the coaches?
- Does the coaching delivery offer a quality experience for the apprentice golfers?
- Are the individual needs of each person catered for by the coaches? Do the golfers get individual coaching, or is it institutionalised?

Research question 4 - To what extent do AASE participants demonstrate characteristics of early or late specialisation in golf?

- What is the variance across the group in terms of late versus early specialisation?
- What are the relative advantages or disadvantages that individuals exhibit due to early or late specialisation?
- How does this affect their chances of 'making it'?

Research question 5 - What have been the critical factors that have mediated the journeys of the apprentice golfers?

- What specifically are these episodes?
- Is there any pattern emerging across the group?
- How have these events influenced the direction of the participants' journeys?

1.5 Researcher biography

Within this type of research, the researchers own background and experience should be detailed and acknowledged (Denzin and Lincoln 2000a). However, to be truly reflexive, researchers should, in addition, "seek ways of demonstrating to their audience their historical and geographic situatedness, their personal investment in the research, [and] various biases they bring to the work" (Gergen and Gergen 2000; 1027). The biography below also points towards my own values and positioning, being involved with, and in, golf coaching and having previously undertaken ethnographic research.

It was thought best to place this biography at the start of the thesis so the reader could understand my background and experience and how this has influenced the approach to the whole piece, including my reading of the relevant literature as well as my approach to the method of enquiry.

Since 2007 I have worked for the Professional Golfers Association (PGA) as Coach Education and Development Manager (England). The overarching task of this role is to work towards the PGAs 21st century vision for golf coaching ensuring the '*Right Coach, Right Place, Right Time*' (PGA 2013). More specifically, the role covers a wide spectrum of

responsibilities including Coach Education, Coach Development, management of the coaching system, management of a team of four Regional Coaching Development Officers as well as being the PGA lead officer in the England Golf Partnership (EGP) which includes responsibility for delivery of the Whole Sport Plan for golf for the 2013-2017 period. As part of my role in the EGP, I wrote the coaching section of the Whole Sport Plan (for 2013-17) that the EGP submitted to Sport England for consideration for government funding. This Golf Whole Sport Plan (2013-2017) was awarded £13.5M by Sport England that was seen as a very positive outcome given an increasingly difficult and competitive funding environment. Other sports have had funding cuts or have been placed on probation pending their results after the first year of delivery (for example, swimming). This funding secured the future of coach development staff and activity for the 2013-2017 period.

In terms of Coach Education I manage the programme of courses at Level 1 - 4 for PGA Golf Professionals in Great Britain and Ireland and for volunteer coaches in England; annually there would typically be 700 candidates at Level 1 and 350 at Level 2. The Level 3 and Level 4 courses have just been launched; the Level 3 is a golf technical qualification. The Level 4 qualification is made up of the Level 3 plus an academic qualification in the form of a Post Graduate Diploma delivered by the University of Birmingham. I have lead responsibility for Level 4 for the PGA and the sport of golf. I also have the responsibility of reporting to the examining body the Association of Sports Qualifications (ASQ) on progress and quality assurance for Level 1 and 2 courses as well as convening and chairing the Coach Education appeals panel for the PGA.

In terms of coach development, the England coaching team that I lead, run an annual national coaching conference. In 2013 speakers included renowned golf coach John Jacobs, who is widely regarding as the 'godfather' of European golf coaching; 385 coaches attended the conference. The England coaching team also deliver regional and national education programmes that are aimed at up skilling coaches in the five EGP (and Sport England) outcomes areas, namely 14-25 year olds, 26 plus, talent, disability and quality experience.

I manage the coaching system in England in conjunction with partners in Sport England, sports coach UK and EGP. The purpose of this work is to ensure that we deliver the '*Right Coach in the Right Place at the Right Time*' and practically this means assessing the demand and supply of golf coaches across the county (through a national coaching audit and the interrogation of these results), assessing the needs of different participant groups (through developing the golf 'Participant Development Model') and ensuring that coaches are fit for purpose as well as having a structure around them that supports their activity, for example licensing, qualification, professional status, education and so on.

From 2010 until 2014 I oversaw and managed the County Academy Programme (CAP) that was an England talent pathway programme running in 32 counties aimed at young people with potential in golf. CAP is a bridging programme in that it is the part of the development work and links talent outcomes with participation and as such is challenging to manage given that it contributes to multiple Sport England outcome areas. The programme is part funded by Sport England and ran from 2009/10 to 2012/13 with funding for this period totalling £974,000. This programme is the first step on the England talent pathway (see appendix 1 and 2) and an intrinsic part of the 2013-2017 Whole Sport Plan. Funding of over £600,000

from Sport England has been secured for the 2013-2017 period and this will be match by at least the same contribution from the County Golf Partnerships that run the programme. The programme aims to give an opportunity to two thousand 14 to 18 year olds with potential to access coaching and support. There are two exits routes for these participants, firstly to Senior County level representation, the next stage on the talent pathway, or to golf clubs and regular and hopefully sustained participation in the sport. In 2013 CAP was a finalist at the UK Coaching Awards in the category of 'Coaching Intervention of the Year'.

I am the PGA lead officer in the EGP and as such sit on the 'Strategy Group' as well as the operational 'Performance' and 'Participation' groups. I also manage a team of four Regional Coaching Development Officers who act as 'coaching consultants' for County Golf Partnerships in England as well as working on the CAP. I am responsible for the writing and delivery of the coaching elements of the Whole Sport Plan for golf and for the use of associated budgets. This coaching plan was supported by Sport England with funding of £1.5M in the 2013-2017 period.

I am also a 'Fellow' of the PGA having myself having graduated in 2005 from the Applied Golf Management Studies (AGMS) degree course with first class honours from the University of Birmingham. Within the AGMS degree course I undertook a dissertation titled "Children's' Socialisation in Golf: A Case Study of a Golf Driving Range" (Wright 2005). This study classified young golfers who took part in group-based golf sessions in generic groups: ball hitters, learners, fun-seeking socialisers and socialisers and found that coaches were only meeting the needs of a small minority of children.

After graduation I spent two years as a full-time golf coach working in Essex. I undertook initial training with the Scott Cranfield Golf Academy and was then deployed at a busy, modern golf driving range and found the role to be very rewarding. The academy was structured in a way that all the coaches (approximately thirty-five) would come together every couple of months to get involved in professional discussions, educational presentations or workshops. This community of practice approach was very beneficial for me as a newly qualified coach who needed all the help and guidance available. During this time I also undertook a Masters Degree at the University of Birmingham and wrote a dissertation entitled "Coffee and Golf: A Monday night ritual" (Wright 2008). This study followed the experiences of a group of new female golfers who were all in their forties. One of the main findings of this research was that this group of golfers took part for the social aspect; the fact that they were playing golf was almost immaterial. This social aspect of participation in golf is something not widely acknowledged or catered for by golfs' governing bodies but something that is now being addressed through a more customer/participant-led approach.

Prior to this I was educated at comprehensive school and Sixth Form College in the late 1980s, where I undertook 'O' and 'A' levels with moderate success. I was then employed by a high-street bank in 1987, eventually leaving in 2002. During this time I fulfilled differing roles in many branches including a role as a personal account adviser. This job entailed interviewing up to 30 customers per week, questioning them on financial issues and selling them financial services. I undertook this role for two years. Immediately prior to leaving the bank I was a Senior Branch Manager overseeing five London branches. This involved overall responsibility for their sales and service performance, including management of a large sales team, service quality, staff development, adherence to budgets, operational issues and managing high value customers.

I have played golf intermittently from a young age, mainly due to the influence of my family members - my maternal grandparents were regular participants. I first joined a golf club at the age of 14 and played there for a few years before temporarily giving the game up, mainly due to transportation and logistical issues – I lived many miles away from the golf course with not easy methods of public transportation to get there. During my childhood I played many sports at school. I was in the school football, athletics (discus thrower) and cricket teams. I also took part in rounders, badminton and tennis. However, my great passion was playing football in break-time and at lunch time; lessons were a chore to get through in order to get to the next footballing opportunity. When I reached Sixth form College something interesting happened (a critical, but not fatal incident for my golf participation); I wanted to go to my golf club and play or practice golf as my 'games' activity. However, the college would not allow this. They did offer that I could practice golf on the college football/rugby pitches, but this was not much fun at all, the pitch was like a glue pot, there were no greens, flags, bunkers or anything to inspire. I quickly gave up and joined the table tennis club instead. I came back to golf in my mid-twenties and my handicap came down to a low point of 3. As part of my PGA training I was required to take part in tournament rounds but after becoming a PGA Professional I have not played often.

I was motivated to do this research for several reasons. Firstly, golf coaching and the development of golf coaches is my day job; I really wanted to understand what the requirements of a coach were in the AASE environment. I hoped this experience and these findings would help me get to grips with what I needed to consider professionally as I have a specific remit that is aligned to developing and supporting golf coaches who are working in the England talent pathway. Secondly, I was curious about, and wanted to understand, the experiences of the participants in the programme, the social world that was created within the

programme. The PGA approach to coach development means that before we can really 'build' a golf coach, and provide education to equip them with the right skills and attributes to do the job, we need to understand what the participant wants and needs - a golfer-centred approach. Finally I wanted to contribute in any way I could to the further the understanding of performance golfers in England and in some way, positively contribute to the success of English golfers and the England talent pathway in the future.

1.6 Overview of the study

The following chapters will seek to build on this introduction to the thesis. Chapter 2 sets out to review existing literature and data in this area. This begins with an examination of how young people are socialised into sports and then goes to look at existing models of participation. Factors affecting the career trajectory of young performers are then addressed and this is followed by an examination of the confluence of sport and education within sporting academies. The work of Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger is then used to examine the existence of and dynamics of communities of practice. There is then a section addressing coaching and golf coaching specifically. This begins with the assertion that historically coaching has been too focused on the 'what' rather than the 'how' of the process.

Chapter 3 sets out in detail the methodological standpoint that was used to undertake this research. It goes on to describe the tools that were used in this process, namely observation, interview and the writing of field notes. There is also an analysis of the grounded theory style approach that was used to generate the data.

Chapters 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 detail the findings of the study and discuss emergent issues. These chapters deal with the research questions directly. Chapter 9 reflects back on the AASE programme overall and discusses whether the programme delivered its stated objective. There is also a short section that updates the journey of some of the key participants' post-AASE.

Finally, Chapter 10 draws a conclusion to the thesis based around the research questions and considers the implications and limitations of the study.

1.7 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter sought to outline this thesis and in so doing acted as an introduction to the piece. The research aims to shine a light on the academy system in golf and identify if this approach was beneficial to the individuals it purported to support, as well as the talent pathway and the objectives of the national governing bodies of amateur golf.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Chapter Introduction

A widely held belief in society is that sport is a beneficial activity for young people developing mental, physical, psychomotor and social skills and attributes (Bouchard et al 2012). However, competitive sport is not always seen to deliver these benefits or to be a healthy pursuit for young people; it often focuses on winning and the individual interests of the young person are of secondary importance (David 2005). This chapter sets out the background and research base that exists regarding young people, sports participation, sport performance, and golf coaching. The chapter examines and discusses the pertinent issues arising from these areas and, in so doing, forms the theoretical base on which the study is constructed.

The sociology of sport will be examined, focusing on areas such as socialisation into sport, family issues in sport participation, peer influence and young people, sport and education. There is also a critical appraisal of a number of models of participation that have been proposed in recent years.

The journey of young people through development models and talent pathways in golf is assessed. These journeys are influenced and mediated by a number of factors including elements within the control and power of the young person, such as work ethic and talent, but also by factors beyond their control, such as luck and critical episodes.

There have been a number of education programmes that have been developed across sports in recent years that aim to mitigate the vagaries of talent pathways and these will be assessed. By their very nature, the structure of elite sport means that the vast majority of performers who begin on a journey to elite performance end up dropping out before their aspirations are realised. Educational programmes have been devised and implemented within many sports, such as football and golf, in order to provide young people with qualifications to aid their transition into alternative careers if they do not make it into elite performance contexts.

The work of Etienne Wenger and Jean Lave in developing a community of practice approach to understanding group dynamics and learning will then be discussed. Research that used a community of practice approach as a theoretical base will also be examined. The golfers in this study had already been exposed to, and have learned about, golf culture encompassing dress, behaviour and other factors and it is important to consider how shared cultural systems are inter-related and how they co-constitute learning in a community of practice (Lave and Wenger 2006).

Issues that surround coaching generally and golf coaching in particular are discussed. Recent developments regarding coaching qualifications in the UK are reviewed and there is also a section looking at coaching expertise as well as the problematic nature of coaching.

2.2 The Sociology of Sport

The sociology of sport is the study of human beings and the societies they form in sporting environments linked to social structures and phenomenon (Armour and Jones 2000). This sub-discipline of sociology is an area of considerable interest given the significant role of

sport in modern society; the study of this area should inform us about how sporting societies interact with issues such as the family, education, politics and the media (Coakley and Pike 2014).

The early, uncritical sociology of sport was based around the concept that sport reflected society (Donnelly 2007). This seemed logical, as sport was considered beneficial because it taught individuals that to be part of a social system. This thinking moved on to show how sport and society were seen to be reproducing the status quo in society, implicating issues of race and gender in particular (Donnelly 2007). However, this standpoint views individuals within society as passive instruments. Other perspectives reject this, arguing that this passivity would mean that social patterns and groups would remain unchanged forever. Other perspectives see the interaction of sport and society as more of a two-way process, in which the reproductive forces are resisted. Here reflexive individuals may consciously value sport as beneficial whilst at the same time being aware that ruling groups attempt to use sport as a controlling instrument.

It has been argued that the theory of the sociology of sport should be used in order to improve the human condition (Yiannakis 2000). This may involve practically helping all those involved in sport, from coaches and participants, to administrators and organisers of sport, to understand the ways in which sociological competencies underpin our being (Armour and Jones 2000). This understanding enables us to explain and predict social behaviour and, as such, can be an essential weapon of the sports professional (Hylton and Totten 2001); "sociology is best viewed as, first and foremost, a practical skill. As such and with study, we may become more competent in our sociologies and, as a result, more able to achieve those goals which are within our possibilities" (Armour and Jones 2000; 4).

2.2.1 Socialisation in(to) sport

Sport is a pervasive part of modern society and young people are very likely to be involved in sport in some way whether this is in school, through sports clubs, or by means of casual play. In 2013 the Office of National Statistics reported that in 2011/12, 83% of 5-10 year olds had taken part in sports activities outside of school time in the previous four week period and that 96% of 11-15 year olds had taken part in sports activities both in and out of school in the same four weeks; these figures show no significant change since 2008/09 (Office of National Statistics 2013). Socialisation into sporting environments then, is experienced by many young people. The process of this socialisation was defined by Côté and Hay (2002a; 486) as a "lifelong process through which individuals develop their self-concept, identity, attitudes, dispositions and behaviours"; much of this process occurs within settings such as families, schools and sport organisations. Socialisation refers to a process by which individuals develop their conceptions of who they are and how they relate to others through social interactions (Jones and Armour 2000). In terms of the sports context, the important social processes of play, games, physical activity and sport represent a prime medium for teaching children fundamental concepts of ideas, norms, rules and the expectations of society (Greendorfer et al 2002). As such the socialisation process could therefore influence participation and subsequent drop out from particular sports.

Socialisation can be conceptualised as a dual process of interaction and development through which human beings learn who they are and how they are connected to the social world; these orientations being a basis for individual behaviour (Coakley 2011). The process can be theorised as socialisation *into* sport (the influence of various agents of socialisation on participants) and socialisation *through* sport (the behaviours, values and norms learned)

(Coakley 2001). Socialisation then "represents a complex and dynamic assimilation of social, cultural and cognitive processes through which we interact with others, synthesise information and actively participate in the social worlds around us" (Greendorfer et al 2002; 153); thus we are the products of these cultural values and ideas.

2.2.2 Young people and socialisation into sport

Parents are critical agents of sports socialisation, especially with younger children (de Knop et al 1998, Côté 1999, Smoll et al 2011). Parenting style, support, and expectation all have an important effect on children, as these issues can have a positive or negative effect on their sport participation; "a family provides the social setting in which children can develop and maintain an identity, self-esteem, and motivation for sport participation and performance" (Côté and Hay 2002b; 505). In addition parents may provide practical support to participation. Kay (2003) found that this involvement may be two fold; firstly, that children whose families participate in sport are more likely to participate themselves, especially if that parent is the same gender, and secondly, parental support for sport is required in terms of finance and transport.

Once a young person is participating in sport, what Jowett (2009; 34) describes as "a multidimensional situational construct", there are several individuals who become influential. The most important aspects of this circle of influence are the relationships between child, parent and coach: the so-called 'sporting triangle' (Jowett and Poczwardowski 2007), or 'athletic triangle' (Smoll et al 2011). Defining relations and responsibilities within this triad are critical to ensuring a working relationship (Jowett and Poczwardowski 2007). One of the ways in which parents can ensure successful relationships between coach and player is by

attending to closeness (emotional tone and connection of relations, trust and respect), commitment (intention to maintain a working partnership) and complementarity (a level of cooperative and effective working relations) within that relationship (Jowett 2003 and Jowett and Timson-Katchis 2005). This model was further developed with the addition of 'co-orientation', even so, as the young person gets older the power within this sporting triangle are subject to change and a rigid model such as this does not allow for enough flexibility to account for the open-ended and complex nature of human relations. For example, from an initial position where often the parent will select and recruit a coach and normally transport the young person to the club, the young person gains a degree of independence and will take control over some of these areas, whereupon the parental influence is reduced. This process though will be subject to each of the parties involved and innumerable factors that may drive and predict when and if these changes will occur. However, in terms of closeness LaVoi (2007) found nineteen different dimensions that were reported in this classification, including communication, trust and mutuality and as such this makes the use and usefulness of the model open to question.

As the young person gets older, the level of influence of the family reduces and the influence of peers grows. Indeed, Weinberg and Gould (2011) suggest that many children participate in sport in order to provide the opportunity to socialise with existing friends and make new ones; MacPhail et al (2003; 263) agree, saying that "enjoyment appeared to depend not only on being involved in a range of activities…but also being involved with already established friends". In addition they found that some children had no established friends when they joined a sports group, but making friends once there was a key factor in continuing participation. As children get older they tend to spend more time with peers and hence their influence grows; often peers are catalysts for sports participation (Côté 2002).

2.2.3 Young people and sports performance

When young people graduate from taking part in sport for fun and enjoyment to competitive sport, this signals a significant change in the environment that they experience. Professional sport cultivates the theory that it offers an attractive, and highly lucrative, alternative to normal career options. Whilst this is true for some, for the vast majority this is not the case as there are only a small number of athletes who will reach the pinnacle of their sport (David 2005). Competitive sport often revolves around talent systems that put an emphasis on the number of medals won, rather than the health and well-being of the participants; "the identification and selection process for gifted young athletes are frequently governed by results-oriented criteria alone. Some children are traumatised by the cruel selection system applied in competitive sport, in which only the toughest will make it" (David 2005; 36). An example of the environment that young people might find themselves in within competitive sport is detailed by Ryan (1995; 22) in her study of gymnastics and ice dancers where the regime was harsh by design, a coach was quoted as saying "these little girls are like scorpions...you put them in a bottle, and one scorpion will come out alive. That scorpion will be a champion". This then is a very different environment from the playing of sport for enjoyment and recreational reasons.

In the area of competitive sport, the issue of developing individual performers, including the debate around early versus late specialisation, has been a subject of much enquiry within sport and golf (American Academy of Pediatrics 2000, Wiersma 2000, Côté 2002, Fraser-Thomas et al 2005, Baker et al 2009, Hayman et al 2011, Russell and Limle 2013). In golf, what is best for the county, region and Home Union in terms of producing teams seems to take precedence over developing individuals; this culture of a system-led approach is firmly

embedded. Most of the debate concerning talent development within English counties and regions and has been based on personal opinion and attempts to duplicate the trajectories of previously successful players but often these decisions are taken by amateur squad managers who have little expertise in making such assessments. With such a lack of expertise among decision makers, there is a particular attraction to follow two particular strategies.

Firstly, asking players to concentrate on golf from an early age and to give up other sports; the model of focusing on excessive block practice is perhaps logical to the ill informed. Sometimes this is justified when comparing to early specialisation sports such as gymnastics, but there is evidence (such as that found in Ryan 1995) that the approach can be damaging to the individual.

The second prevalent model is to duplicate the development of existing high performing players; the rationale being 'it worked for them, so it must be right'; again this may seem logical but is ill conceived. This model (often referred to as the Tiger effect (Cashmore 2002) and more recently the Rory effect) has seen many bodies and organisations mirroring the development of high profile individuals, in an attempt to replicate their successes. Tiger Woods and Rory McIlroy, both of whom are 'major' winners (the four golf 'major championships' being the US Open, US Masters, The Open and the USPGA) and have been world number one ranked in golf, were child prodigies (Barbie 2012). This is very dangerous though as the journey of one individual is just that, individual and cannot be applied to others (Bailey et al 2010). In recent years this attractiveness of following the Tiger model may have waned somewhat due to the personal scandals that began at the end of 2009. These scandals began to reveal a childhood and upbringing that most parents may not necessarily want to replicate for their children. However, leaving the specifics of this individual case to one side,

whether young people should specialise in one sport or pursue a wide range of sports during the adolescent period of their life is an area of much debate (for example, Russell and Limle 2013). This issue is clearly important for sports policy and coach education as well as an important factor in terms of long-term participation figures and high performance as well.

2.2.4 Sustained participation and performance; the role of coaching

There is a strong case to link sustained participation and coaching; "there is an excellent match between what individuals want from participating in sport and what good coaches provide" (North 2007; 20). The motivation of young people to take part in sport must be therefore somewhat reflected by coaching delivery if positive outcomes are to be achieved. A meta-analysis of the motivations of young people to take part in sport was undertaken by Allender et al (2006) and the most prevalent factors identified as motivators were: weight management, social interaction and enjoyment. Occhino et al (2013; 90) also found social interaction to be critical: "Coaching is largely a social activity where engagement with athletes and support staff can enhance the experiences for all involved". North (2007) agrees, stating that social bonds between players and coaches can lead to increased levels of satisfaction and therefore increased participation, but that the use of coaching as a participation tool is not recognised by coaches. Among participation motivators, North (2007) details the importance of social interaction. The work of Foster et al (2005) highlights the importance of the social benefits of participation but also highlights the dangers of authoritarian and prescriptive methods of coaching, which may result in attrition rather than sustained participation. Although he reports a correlation between coaching and sustaining participation, North concludes that there is a great need for further research into how this phenomenon actually works in practice; a need for "participant-coach case studies in a

participation context" (North 2007; 22). In golf there is little such research and this study seeks to begin the process of building knowledge and understanding in this area. This area is of particular interest within talent pathways as often young golfers are provided with a coach at county, region and national level that may be in addition to a home coach who is often based at their own golf club. This multitude of coaches has given cause for concern as often the player is receiving contradictory advice from two, three or even four coaches simultaneously. To better understand a young person's journey through sport, there have been a number of models developed to examine these issues.

2.2.5 Côté's Developmental Model of Sports Participation (DMSP)

This initial stage model of socialisation and participation is widely discussed and tested. It suggests three stages: sampling, specialising, and investment/recreational stages, which cover the period from early childhood to late adolescence (Côté and Hay 2002a). The initial sampling stage (roughly 7-12 years old) is where the child tries out and experiences many different sports and activities, with the emphasis during this stage being on fun and enjoyment. This stage is critical as a positive experience may well lead to continued participation in subsequent stages. This supports earlier research that found that the most common reasons for participation among children at this age were to experience fun and social enjoyment (De Knop et al 1995). According to the DMSP model, during the sampling stage children's experiences in sport are characterised as experimenting with new or different means of doing things rather than attaining a goal (Côté and Hay 2002a). According to Côté and Hay (2002a), this is also the stage in which the child will develop their basic identities, motivations, values, and beliefs about sport and is thus a critical time for each individual. During this period, parents are thought to be largely responsible for getting their children

interested in sport but, interestingly, as the child gets involved in numerous sports and activities, this may result in parents being socialised into new activities themselves (Côté and Hay 2002a). From this initial sampling stage, there are three possible routes: dropout, recreational involvement and what Côté and Hay (2002a) call the 'specialising stage'. During this stage (roughly 13-16 years old), the child has now focused on one or two sports. Fun is still important, but sport-specific skills development takes over. The child is more motivated and wants technical instruction. The decision to specialise in a sport or not may be due to many factors, but Côté and Hay (2002a) suggest that especially important reasons may be positive experiences with the coach, encouragement from siblings, success or simple enjoyment. Critically this is the stage where the influence of peers becomes more important in comparison to parental influence. The 'investment stage' (beginning around 14 years old) is where the child begins to "commit to achieving an elite level of performance in a single activity" (Côté and Hays 2002a; 487).

The DMSP model was initially tested in a research piece which focussed on four 20-year-old elite ice hockey players by studying in depth their sporting activities over an extended period (Soberlak and Côté 2003). Deliberate practice and deliberate play were used to analyse participants' activities. The differences between and characteristics of deliberate play and practice are detailed below from Côté et al (2007; 193):

Deliberate play	Deliberate practice
Done for its own sake	Done to achieve a future goal
Enjoyable	Not the most enjoyable
Pretend quality	Carried out seriously
Interest on the behaviour	Interest in outcome of the behaviour
Flexibility	Explicit rules
Adult involvement not required	Adult involvement often required
Occurs in various settings	Occurs in specialised facilities

[Diagram 1 - Differences between deliberate play and deliberate practice (Côté et al 2007; 193)]

It was found that the transition between the stages of sampling, specialising, investment and recreation can be operationalised by significant changes in the athletes engagement in deliberate play, practice and other activities; the study was aimed at assessing how much time these elite players actually spent in deliberate practice, deliberate play and organised games (Soberlak and Côté 2003). It was found that early sport specialisation is not a necessary element in the development of expertise in hockey and that different activities are important at each stage of the individuals' involvement. However, there is no evidence explaining how diverse activities are good for physical and cognitive development.

There were some reliability issues with this research. It is assumed that because these individuals have reached an elite level, then their path towards the elite status must have been optimal - but what if they reached the elite stage despite the system and pattern of the behaviour they exhibited? The sample size was small with only four participants and the

study was situated in North America; as such the validity of this research from a UK perspective must be called into question.

The DMSP suffers from deficiencies. Firstly, the model is very simplistic in its approach; three simple stages cover the whole of the period from 7 or 8 years old to mid teenage years. Generalising to this extent means that individuals' behaviour cannot be catered for (Bailey et al 2010). The model also assumes that all children go through this process in the precise order which Côté and Hay describe. The widths of band for stages within the model are quite broad, often a problem with these types of staging models. This may lead to confusion where an advanced, but younger, individual has progressed further in the model than an older individual, for example, MacPhail et al (2003) found samplers who were aged up to 15 years old.

Accuracy of classification may also be a problem: Do we know exactly what a sampler looks like? Does the model assume that all young children go through the sampling stage? Also, do individuals move from one stage to the next all in one jump? The model was developed from research carried out in Canada and Australia involving the development of elite athletes in rowing, gymnastics, basketball, netball and field hockey and this raises several potential problems. The model may not be culturally transferable; popular sports in the UK for children include football and swimming, and yet these were not sports covered in the research. Given that Australia and Canada are similar westernised societies, could this model be used in other parts of the world? It is perhaps with these problems and issues in mind that Côté and Hay (2002a) suggest that their model should be used more as a framework or guideline from which to work, rather than a hard and fast set of rules.

The original DMSP was updated building on the earlier work, and shortcomings, resulting in a more sophisticated model (Côté and Fraser-Thomas 2007). It suggests three possible sport participation trajectories: recreational participation through sampling, elite performance through sampling and elite performance through early specialisation. Within 'recreational participation through sampling', at ages 6-12, individuals participate in a variety of sports with the focus being primarily on deliberate play activities; those aimed at providing maximum enjoyment. These individuals graduate to the recreational stage, aged 13 plus, and this would be a natural development of deliberate play with a similar desired outcome, enjoyment and health, activities continue to focus on deliberate play but with an element of deliberate practice. For these individuals, coaches should be supportive and encouraging (Côté and Fraser-Thomas 2007).

The second trajectory is that of 'elite performance through sampling'. This trajectory would indicate that specialisation begins around 13, that is, following some initial sampling. During these specialising years, the number of sports participated in reduces and there is a balance of deliberate play and deliberate practice. This specialising phase then leads into the investment years at age 16 plus where individuals commit to one activity and engage primarily in deliberate practice. Côté and Fraser-Thomas (2007) say that this trajectory is a common pathway to elite performance in sports where peak performance is achieved after puberty. Coach athlete relationships here are reciprocal and coaching styles are more skill-oriented and technical.

The third trajectory is elite performance through early specialisation. Côté and Fraser-Thomas (2007; 36) suggest that this is typical for individuals in sports where peak performance is achieved before puberty and as such, early specialisation is required to reach

elite levels. Deliberate play is often skipped and this may result in "negative physical and psychological outcomes...(individuals) often experience overuse injuries, reduced sport enjoyment and are more likely to eventually drop out of the sport they originally specialised in" (Côté and Fraser-Thomas 2007; 36). Clearly this has implications for long-term participation and satisfaction with the chosen sport. According to Bridge and Toms (2013) one of the reasons for the justification for the extensive deliberate practice of this third trajectory is the desire to reach the notional 10,000 hours that Ericsson et al (1993) espouse. This may be exacerbated by the perceived need for selectors, teams, counties, and others to promote early specialisation in their squads so as not to 'lose' individuals to another sport.

Often individuals, such as selectors, advise parents that early specialisation is a good idea and the privatisation and commercialisation of youth sport can only contribute to this effect (Bridge and Toms 2013). While early specialisation will increase the number of hours of deliberate practice, there is evidence to suggest that this may result in greater drop out, burnout and injury; overuse injuries are becoming more prevalent as more young people become involved in organised sports and spend more and more time playing and practising (Brenner 2007, Roberts 2014). Early specialisation may result in "a range of negative consequences affecting physical, psychological, and social development" (Baker et al 2009; 77) and therefore have a long term detrimental effect on participation and therefore general health and well-being and this may be linked to reduced sports participation in young adulthood for early specialisers (Russell and Limle 2013). Later specialisation may not necessarily disadvantage an individual, but there needs to be more research in this area to make this case robust (Baker et al 2009).

As previously mentioned, the development of Côté's research and models are situated in North American (Canadian) culture and context. The education system in Canada has different age and stage boundaries than those in the UK and therefore the comparison problematic. In the UK a young person moves to secondary school at 11 years of age and this tends to signal an increase in the number of sports in which they participate. This increased activity lasts until the age of 16 after which sports participation may reduce, but Côté says that by the 14 to 15 years of age, a young person should be specialising in just one sport. However as Bridge and Toms (2013) suggest, in schools, educators may select certain individuals in multiple sports as they may have developed 'higher motor potential' with the aim of achieving sporting success for the school; this multiple participation may serve to strengthen motor and psychological capabilities and lead to higher performance in late adolescence. This point serves to confirm the assertion of Bailey et al (2010) who say that models such as DMSP should enable the explanation and predication of behaviour, but there is little evidence to suggest that they do.

2.2.6 DMSP: a UK perspective

Evidence of sampling behaviour has been found in the UK (MacPhail et al 2003, MacPhail and Kirk 2006). These studies in athletics contexts found strong evidence to support this first stage in the model of participation developed by Côté and Hay (2002a): young people undertook a wide range of sports the motivation for which was said to be fun and enjoyment, additionally deliberate play was apparent. However, this work highlighted some differences from the original model as well as developments in understanding; key features of the sampling phase were still evident in the specialising stage, but there were subtle differences

in these factors. Other factors were new including the notion that the quality of the sporting experience whilst in the specialising phase can increase the chances of young people remaining involved in sport and that specific pathways were needed to propel young people through sport (MacPhail and Kirk 2006).

Characteristics of the specialising stage, as identified by MacPhail and Kirk (2006), included a reduction in the number of sports played; the reasons for choosing these sports were varied including performance standard, family commitments, single parent families' logistics, and requirements of other sports and activities. Enjoyment, success and competition were also factors – if children performed well they were more likely to stay. Deliberate practice was also identified: children wanted to train 'more seriously' and coaches expected more from the young people. Finally, support mechanisms were found to be important; the support of the family (although sometimes the parents appeared keener than the children), the school, club and coach.

There has been cross-sport testing of the DMSP model in terms of UK participation (Bridge and Toms 2013). In line with DMSP, UK participants did indeed increase the number of sports they participated in during the sampling years and those who participated widely then took part in a higher standard of competition later. The study also found broad agreement with the DMSP notion that focusing on one sport takes place in the investment phase. However, the majority of individuals who reached national level of competition between the ages of 16 and 18, were not engaged in their main sport at 7 or 9 years of age (Bridge and Toms 2013), suggesting later specialisation. This is in contrast to previous studies in football (where there was a frequent start age of 5 years old for those who later became professional players) and basketball (where 87% were playing by aged 10). Participation in the main sport

(by later national level competition) was 65% at aged 11 and 86% at aged 13; they suggest "participation in the main sport during the sampling years may be important, but that participation before this is not essential" (Bridge and Toms 2013; 95). These results may be surprising to many people including parents being counter-intuitive and contrary to popular culture.

The shortcoming of this study was that acknowledged early and late specialisation sports could not be separated out in the data to corroborate this notion; the sample size of participants' individual sports was not sufficient to draw conclusions. However, broadly speaking Bridge and Toms (2013) conclude that early specialisation is not a requirement for higher standards of performance at 18 years of age and that a higher level of competition is increased when individuals participate in three sports during the specialising year of the DMSP model. There are then clearly some areas of alignment between the DMSP model and application to the UK. There are however, some significant differences many of which may be culturally based.

2.2.7 DMSP: a golf perspective

Research focused on English golfers who had made it to the upper reaches of the amateur talent pathway has been undertaken (Hayman et al 2011). This research assessed developmental, psychosocial and contextual factors in an attempting to discover the areas that were important in achieving elite golf status. All of the participants were representing England internationally and had therefore made it through the talent pathway to achieve the highest level of amateur representation. It was found that these individuals did not follow an early specialisation route and in fact "encountered numerous sporting activities within a

playful, developmentally supportive environment until selection for international representative teams during late adolescence" at which point deliberate practice became more evident (Hayman 2011; 256). It is interesting that this study was undertaken with the EGU (men) rather than the EWGA (women). The EWGA had, until around 2011 followed a policy of selecting squads at an early age and 'hot-housing' these individuals by insisting on significant quantities of deliberate practice and the exclusion of participation in other sports. During this period English Women's golf enjoyed little success and the majority of talent pathway players dropped out from the sport, just as they should have been be entering the high end of the amateur game and starting in the professional game. Indeed, Hayman et al (2011; 257) concluded that "long term deliberate practice is not an essential requirement for the attainment of excellence as an adolescent sport performer", rather, success was due to the interaction of developmental, familial and contextual factors. As such it is suggested that golf governing bodies should support early diversification and deliberate play, whilst acknowledging the need for deliberate practice in the transition from elite adolescent to senior level competitor. These recommendations, which are in line with the thinking of Côté, should ensure that young people should experience "multiple sports within a non-competitive, task oriented, fun based learning environment that facilitates the refinement of motor skills as opposed to deliberate practice" (Hayman et al 2011; 258).

The small sample size in this research does leaves the findings open to question, but they do appear to corroborate the research of Toms and Colclough (2012), who also examined these issues from a golf specific perspective. It should also be said that as Bailey and Toms (2010; 157) point out, talent pathways do not necessarily reflect a Darwinian ideal of "absolute superiority" of these individuals who make it to the next stage, but instead reflect "temporary

superiority within their niche", that is to say, "the best do not survive, but rather the best adapt to specific environmental demands to survive".

It may therefore be worth considering the journey and adherence, or not, to the DMSP ideal of golfers who have made it through talent pathways to elite status. The experiences of 36 elite golfers (including Nicklaus, Palmer, Woods, Norman, Els, Faldo, Mickelson, Ballesteros and Singh) who had won at least one major championship ('major championships' classified as: US Open, US Masters, The Open, USPGA) was undertaken focusing on their developmental journey (Colclough 2010). The sample was culturally mixed with most representation from North America but also golfers from the UK, Europe and Africa. This research supports the multiple development pathways of the DMSP; two golfers took up the game at aged 2, others including Norman and Singh, did not start until they were 14 years of age. The research was not able to identify the pattern of sampling versus specialising and deliberate play versus deliberate practice, but it can be assumed that those taking the game up for the first time at 14 years of age were not early specialisers, those taking the game up at aged 2 may well have been. Colclough (2010) calculated average age among the sample for some key moments in their development: started to play the game at aged 8, turned professional at aged 21, won on Tour (the elite level Tours of the PGA Tour or European Tour) aged 24 and won their first major at age 29. So, the average time it took to reach the pinnacle of golf performance was a journey of 21 years. When this is considered in relation to the DMSP, these results would seem to support both elite performance through sampling and elite performance through early specialisation.

There is a divergence of opinion regarding the benefits of early versus late specialisation (Bailey et al 2010). It is true to say that certain sports including gymnastics and swimming

encourage this early specialisation and positively build their development programmes around it. The benefits of undertaking this path is that by starting early, the individual player can begin to 'clock-up' hours of practice towards the 10,000-hour target that Ericsson et al (1993) suggest. Without this it is argued that in these sports a late starter would be unable to catch up with these invested hours and would always lag behind in terms of development (Bailey et al 2010). Indeed, female gymnasts have been known to attempt to slow and stop the development of their bodies; puberty was put off in order to maintain an ideal body shape. This was achieved by means of self-inflicted starvation that prevented menstruation, but this in turn can lead to a lack of oestrogen and weakening of the bones that can lead to premature osteoporosis and greater susceptibility to injury (Ryan 1995). Although this is an extreme example, there are potentially serious consequences of early specialisation; impaired development in childhood, stunting of social as well as psychological skills. The early repetitive practice can also lead to lifelong injury or damage (Wiersma 2000) as well as a reduction in the fun that young athletes cite as being the most important aspect of participation. Tennis is a good case in point here; the 1980s and 1990s saw a huge number of high profile tennis youngsters burning out (for example, Tracey Austen and Martina Hingis). It is true in golf that there appears to be a tendency for elite golfers to continue participating in other sports, as they get to mid and late teens (Toms and Colclough 2012). Golf is also a sport where many players come back having had a few years away; after the 45 years of age landmark, individuals come back to golf having given up another sport, or being free from familial responsibilities and effects on their finances (Fresh Minds 2011, KPMG 2011).

DMSP and other models of development of course need to take account of individual sport factors, but it should be noted that cultural situatedness is critical to the accuracy, and therefore relevance, of such models. A one-size-fits-all approach is not a sustainable one and

sports should assess the needs of *each athlete* in *each circumstance* if a true developmental model is to be established. The use and development of these models then could therefore be seen as a futile task given the individual nature of sport, individual circumstance and lifestyle. However, these models could be used to guide and advise administrators and coaches, rather than be taken too literally.

Given all these factors and counter arguments of models and patterns of participation, it should be remembered that the coach can help make the young persons journey through sport much more enjoyable, fun and rewarding by mitigating against the dangers outlined above; the critical player/coach relationship is a potential antidote. The proficient coach can use his/her knowledge of development to best advise his/her athletes and not only help them develop their sports skills, but potentially their life skills. The AASE programme studied here was designed to support existing high performance players by providing educational opportunities and an alternative if playing professionally did not work out. However, most of the young golfers studied in this piece, twenty-three out of twenty-four, were late specialisers as defined by DMSP.

2.2.8 The bio-psycho-social model

Having reviewed the literature around participant development, Bailey et al (2010) suggest an approach of a bio-psycho-social model, which acts as an antidote to the rather inflexible models of participation detailed later. This approach places the understanding of the individual at the heart of player development, and acknowledges a 'dynamic interaction' between biological, psychological and social factors. This approach was seen to be a development of earlier and traditional nature versus nurture debates that were too simplistic

and old fashioned. Instead, an interactionist approach was needed; the complexities of which they explore in more detail in their academic review (Bailey et al 2010). Player development is a result and function of numerous factors that interact with each other. These can be broadly defined as:

- Biological perspectives – factors such as: innate speed, physique and endurance. These factors are extremely variable during adolescence as there are significant changes in body shape and structure. These changes bring anatomical and muscular changes which impact on performance. This biological maturation is non-linear and dynamic, meaning an "active variance in the development of fitness components between individuals" (Bailey et al 2010; 1).

- Psychological perspectives – factors such as: mental skills, attitude, motivation and resilience. Bailey et al (2010) say that individuals encounter a range of long and short developmental stages and the transition between stages, which can be challenging. However, often these stages and transitions are not catered for within models or in the practice of coaches and administrators.

- Sociological perspectives – factors such as: family, social class, income and peer groups. These are factors that are not attended to in existing models of participation, but can have major effects on initial participation patterns and on-going attrition rates.

It is argued that this framework can help us to explain and understand engagement at every level of sport, from young children who are sampling sports to elite performers (Bailey et al 2010). The ability to successfully negotiate these factors could lead to high levels of

performance and enjoyment, whilst the inability to do this could lead to burnout and or dropout (Coakley and Pike 2014). Historically, talent development systems place great emphasis on biological perspectives, little on psychological perspectives and none on sociological ones; this is at odds with the reported motivations of young people to participate being based around skill development, physical development and social interaction. Participant development therefore needs further work and should remain central to coaching developments in the UK (Bailey et al 2010).

2.2.9 Socialisation in golf

There is little research looking at socialisation within golf apart from the work of Zevenbergen et al (2002) and Shotton et al (2004). In their ethnographic study of gender influences at a private golf club, Shotton et al (2004) found that there were distinct social groups within the club context and that the members recognised these groups. It was found that women "showed greater respect for rules and regulations, paid greater attention to etiquette, were distinctly more organised during committee meetings and formal events than men, and appeared to value the social benefits of golf more than skill acquisition or victory" (Shotton et al 2004; 5). The men, who made up the vast majority of members (400 out of a total of 550) of the club, were more overtly competitive and placed greater value on winning and improving skill levels than the women. Men were often reluctant to observe club rules and regulations and in fact had to be reminded by members of staff as to what the rules were. Shotton et al (2004) concluded that there is a weight of discrimination against women in sport in general and in golf particularly, and that although this was not overt at the club they studied, it was nevertheless an ever-present phenomenon. The research of Zevenbergen et al (2002; 1) backs this up, stating that "Golf clubs and golf are structured in ways that legitimate

the habitus of the dominant, social and cultural groups" and that this process is affected by the rules and culture of the club. In their study of Paradise Golf Club, Zevenbergen et al summarise that the Club acted as a socialising agent that added to the cadets' (aged 8-14 years) existing cultural capital. The golf club set out to socialise the cadets in a particular way and the young people were exposed to practices that conveyed meanings and values that the club esteemed. Hanrahan and Gallois (1993; 623) believe that "much of the influence exerted by individuals upon each other works through the process of social reinforcement". Zevenbergen et al (2002) wanted to examine how the golf club legitimised the habitus of the dominant social and cultural groups, this approach was taken so as to "provide a means through which it is possible to understand and theorise the embodiment of certain aspects of the social context which will predispose people to act, think and behave in certain ways" (Zevenbergen et al 2002; 3). Habitus was used in two main contexts. Firstly, the cadets' primary habitus was examined; this was influenced by the family of the player and affected how easy or difficult it was for the player to assimilate into the golf club. Secondly the golf club habitus was observed. Zevenbergen et al (2002) refer to this as the club 'agenda' in which apprentice golfers were expected to display certain behaviours and ways of thinking. To be considered 'good' club members, cadets needed to display those aspects of golf habitus 'valorised' within the context of the golf club. It was found that there were many rituals that enabled the cultural practices of the golf club to be performed and reinforced; children had to strictly adhere to practices and behaviours set down by the club, otherwise they were marginalized and excluded. For example, one boy was expelled from the club for 'gross misconduct' that entailed laughing when another child mishit a shot. Both of these studies are valuable in describing, illuminating and communicating a picture of golf club culture. However, it must be remembered that these studies can only be illustrative of the particular context of the study and in the case of Zevenbergen et al, this was from an Australia context.

2.3 Factors affecting career trajectories in sport and golf

The career paths and trajectories of those involved in professional sport are many and varied. As a human endeavour, sport, our interaction with it, and our journeys through it, are highly individual and directed by a number of factors, events and circumstances not least the existence of individual 'talent'. Perhaps the prerequisite for a journey in professional sport is a degree of talent that Tranckle and Cushion (2006; 265) define as "a rare and valuable resource". The factors that mediate the journeys of the talented are worth exploring in order to help understand individual experience, but also to further develop systems that will support individuals through to desired outcomes. This subject has received much attention in the literature, but often the language and classification of these factors has been confusing and contradictory. The first aspect to consider is that of the structure and nature of talent pathways. Secondly, 'luck' (Bailey and Toms 2010) is addressed. The next point to be considered is that of incidents of personal significance (Bailey et al 2010). These have also previously been variously categorised as 'critical incidents' (Côté and Hay 2002c), 'epiphanies' (Denzin 1989) and 'crystallising experiences' (Pickard and Bailey 2009). The final consideration is the athletes' reaction to these various factors. This personal attitude or outlook is something that the individual can have much more control over then the other areas examined here, and may be crucial in determining the outcome of critical incidents such as de-selection from a squad. Within this, elements such as personal disposition (Bailey and Toms 2010), attitude or deliberate experience (Ollis et al 2006), and personal characteristics (Bailey et al 2010) are examined.

2.3.1Talent pathway factors

The reality of most so-called talent pathways in sport is that, as the level of performance increases, the numbers of participants fall. This means that for of those who have the intention of becoming professional players, the vast majority will not make it, and at some point decisions are made regarding who will make it to the next level. These decisions are not easily made. According to Bailey (2005) the three main problems with the talent pathway approach are: the problem of prediction, the problem of participation and the problem of potential. The problem of prediction assumes that participants should move smoothly from the base level up through the following stages and that participation at the lower stages predicts later ability. However, Bailey (2005) says it cannot, indeed giftedness and potential may be better measured by speed of development and improvement, not necessarily current level of ability (Tranckle and Cushion 2006). The problem of participation assumes that selection for higher levels of performance is based on merit, but often these decisions are taken against a backdrop of psycho-social and environmental factors, including the ability to take part in the first place (Bailey 2005). Finally, and perhaps the biggest issue, is the problem of potential. Often development models assume a player's current performance is a clear and effective representation of an individual's ability and potential, which it may not be (Bailey 2005). The most obvious example here is of relative age effect where physical size and strength affect selection for teams and squads over other factors such as developmental stage (Baker et al 2014). Add this to the subjective and judgemental context of talent identification (Rongen et al 2015) and the situation becomes even more complex; natural talent available and identified within systems may be wasted as there is a lack of understanding and knowledge as to how that talent can best be nurtured as well as "a failure to grasp what makes people motivated enough to develop talent" (Tranckle and Cushion

2006; 265). Coaches can offer a possible solution: they have an important and positive part in talent identification and are most familiar with the athletes. However, this statement treats coaches as a homogenous group who have the knowledge, experience and insight to make such judgements when that may not be the case (Tranckle and Cushion 2006).

An individual's navigation through talent pathways is therefore fraught with danger even for the most talented and hard working of athletes. Critical incidents and luck may play out against them and their progress may be blocked by such factors. In order to develop suitable player pathways, policy makers should seek to understand these factors and the associated social background of participants so as to be able to support and develop them; the social background of the individual being as important as physiological and psychological development (Toms and Colclough 2012). In golf, once this amateur talent pathway has been navigated, with all the incumbent issues of critical incidents and luck, this leads to the world of professional golf, although graduation from the talent pathway is not a prerequisite. In golf it is possible to become a professional player having been outside the system, but even for all those who do make professional sporting ranks, the career life span may be quite short as McGillivray et al (2005) point out.

2.3.2 Luck

An individual's personal set of circumstances and luck play important role in career trajectory, although the role of luck is an area where there has been very little academic research (Bailey and Toms 2010) and is one which may be unpalatable due to its uncontrollable nature (Tranckle and Cushion 2006). Unicef (2014), within the Convention of the Rights of the Child, say that education should be directed at developing a child's

personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential, however, how such potential can be measured is not clear. The Convention statement is also open to interpretation as to how such potential should be developed and therefore safeguards need to be in place to ensure the best interests of individuals (Bailey and Toms 2010). Bailey and Toms (2010) go on to say that within these statements there is a presumption that talents and the talented are easily identifiable, however their contention is that this may not possible. As such, talent identification systems are often unjust and unfair as they exaggerate the role of luck rather than seeking the more desirable approach of neutralising it (Bailey 2007). Many of the factors that predicate an athlete to talent development programmes are affected by luck and chance. It seems 'unsporting' that luck should play such a meaningful role in the development of talent and, given the often-large sums of money and funding that are at stake; this seems rather an unsatisfactory situation (Bailey and Toms 2010). There are a number of factors that, if in place, would increase the chances of becoming an elite golfer. Conversely if these factors are not in place the chances of making it are significantly reduced.

A young person can have little influence over the critical dispositions that surround them such as sociological, familial and monetary factors. As such, success in a chosen sport may immediately be reduced due to unfavourable circumstances; "Many of us had the misfortune to be born to the wrong parents, at the wrong time, and in the wrong place, and so we are deprived of the chance of excellence in countless activities" (Bailey and Toms 2010; 154). The factors which might be affected by luck in this regard include: developmental and maturation factors, family issues, friendships, school and geography.

Natural talent may not be distributed evenly among society (an example of luck which is not modifiable) but the opportunity to develop a talent (within talent pathways) must be equitable: this stance is not necessarily 'anti talent', but rather, 'anti privilege' (Bailey and Toms 2010). 'Modifiable' luck in the form of the quality of physical education and the standard of coaching should be available to all. It is clear though that success is generally easier for certain individuals from particular backgrounds. Individuals who make it to talent development programmes are not therefore necessarily the most talented because the process to get to that point is so imbued with luck at every stage (Bailey and Toms 2010). However, coaches can challenge this status quo and attempt to neutralise luck in order to break down barriers to participation and progression.

In assessing the backgrounds of elite level golfers, Toms and Colclough (2012) surveyed 590 PGA Assistant Professionals. These individuals were all about to undertake a three-year Foundation Degree in Professional Golf. As such they all had a handicap of 4 or under, and would be considered elite amateur golfers. The study found that 92% were from a biological, two parent family (compared to the national average of 60%), 69% had parents who played golf (and for international players the figure was 92%) and that 61% of international golfers were the youngest child within the family structure. In terms of educational background the data were equally stark, with there being an over-representation of those educated at selective grammar schools and fee-paying schools, in other words those from middle class families.

In terms of sampling and specialising, only 55% of international golfers were investing only in golf at 18, while the other 45% were playing at least one other sport (of note in terms of these others sports were football, snooker, badminton and table tennis). These statistics that highlight social background, parental involvement in participation and educational

background need to be taken into account when assessing the cultural habit of many young and talented golfers to specialise early (Toms and Colclough 2012). The England talent pathway also, particularly at the lower end it could be argued, places merit and value of early specialisation. Toms and Colclough (2012) summarise by saying that, on the evidence of their research, a young person increases their chances of becoming an elite level golfer if: they come from a biological two parent family, their parent(s) play(ed) golf, they are the youngest of at least two siblings, they live within five miles of a golf club, they started to play the game around ten years of age, they do not need to specialise early and they play particular other sports. These factors are, of course, not in the control of the young person and therefore in the hands of fate and luck.

2.3.3 Incidents of personal significance

Incidents of personal significance (Bailey et al 2010) are said to relate to events such as wins or losses, and selection and de-selection. The framing of the existing literature with regard to these incidents, for example, 'crystallising experiences' (Pickard and Bailey 2009) and 'epiphanies' (Denzin 1989) approaches incidents in a piecemeal way. Crystallising experiences are viewed in a positive light, Pickard and Bailey (2009; 165) describing these experiences as leading to "greater commitment, motivation, self-awareness and identity" and more akin to athletes at the beginning of their sporting career, whereas epiphanies are often framed as being 'moments of crisis' (Denzin 1989) which may be more applicable to career crisis and dropout. However, it should be noted, as Tranckle and Cushion (2006) point out, that these experiences are not always appreciated at a moment in time and may impact in a retrospective way. That said neither of these notions covers the whole spectrum of experiences from the start of a trajectory to the end with all the positive and negative

experiences and narrative that are likely to be experienced. It is perhaps only when both positive and negative incidents can be considered together (and over time) that we might be able to form a lens though which to examine and investigate the journey of individuals through a particular experience or part of their life, such as a career in sport. The term critical incidents (Côté and Hay 2002c) may be a better catch-all phrase to use as these incidents may be viewed as an event or occurrence which has significance for that individual and, according to Pickard and Bailey (2009), often involve stress and the reassessment of 'lives and ambitions'. In addition critical incidents need to be viewed in a range of time frames, as they may be chronic or acute (Bailey et al 2010). For example, de-selection from a squad may be attributable to a particular moment in time, whereas poor coaching within a squad, which could have a significant effect of outcome as de-selection, occurs over a longer period, so perhaps 'critical episodes' may better reflect this dimension. So, critical episodes should be viewed in terms of both positive and negative events, their source either internal or external to the control of the young person, happening acutely or chronically, and as a moment when the career trajectory of the young person may change, and a resultant trajectory ensues. Another dimension to consider here is the assertion of Collins and MacNamara (2012) that talent development programmes should not seek to necessarily minimise 'life stressors' but rather, support young athletes through these situations so as to build mental toughness and resilience. They argue that the talent pathway should not be a "comfortable place to be; rather, it should offer a variety of lessons to be learnt through both explicit and implicit means" (Collins and MacNamara 2012; 6). In this way they argue that the individual is more able to cope with critical episodes later on in their career.

As Collins and MacNamara (2012) allude, it should not be assumed that incidents simply act on the young person, we should consider the personal reaction to these events, as these will

affect the resultant trajectory. Bailey et al (2010; 13) say that an individual's "metacognitive skills, what might simply be called attitude" lead individuals to view critical episodes as more or less positive or negative. De-selection for some then may be the final straw that sees them drop out from a sport, whereas others may view this as a motivation to succeed. This phenomenon was labelled 'deliberate experience' by Ollis et al (2006), and 'personal characteristics' by Bailey et al (2010; 13) who go on to say that "thinking positive may be crucial for optimising development". However, the current talent identification system and talent pathways in golf do not measure this cognitive function and therefore may be selecting and promoting individuals who will eventually drop out, over those who may have the necessary determination and outlook to succeed at the highest level. The resultant trajectory is a meshing of structural issues such as a pyramid shaped talent pathway, and the individual's reaction to their progress, or not, through that pyramid.

2.4 Sport and Education

Sport and education are two distinct and separate entities and the way in which they interact, mainly in academy settings, has been the subject of much enquiry for a number of years, both in the UK and across the world. In Ireland where this educational context of sport was less well developed, Bourke (2003) found that in terms of football, some individuals, because of their desire to avoid education and study, pursued a career in professional sport. Within football in England, and at the behest of the players union, education has been firmly embedded in the development of young players for a number of years. The combination of sporting pursuit and education programmes was the focus of the work of Parker (Parker 1995, Parker 2000a, Parker 2000b, Parker 2001, and Parker 2006) among others. However, this combination of two seemingly different pursuits has not been universally popular; club

managers are often unhappy with the amount of time apprentice footballers spend studying and therefore not playing (O'Donoghue 1999).

2.4.1 Talent development in sport

The number of English sportsmen and women reaching the higher echelons of their chosen sport has been declining. In a football context in 1992 when the Premier League began, 76% of players were English, but fifteen years on the figure had dropped to 37% (Platts and Smith 2009). In 2013 this figure had reduced further to 32%, which is significantly lower than the comparable leagues of Spain (59%) and Germany (50%) (BBC 2013). This pattern is mirrored in golf in England where the base of the talent pathway, (Appendix 1 shows the talent pathway in 2009, Appendix 2 in 2013-17) has been around 2500 participants since 2009, but the numbers going on to represent England are selected from a squad of approximately 20 players. In terms of the world game of golf, English men are widely regarded as having had a golden generation of players who are now at their peak, but despite this, the figures represent a small number at the pinnacle of the talent pathway and elite of the game. As at the end of the 2013 season, there were 26 Englishmen in the top 100 on the European Tour (European Tour 2013), 6 in the top 100 on the PGA Tour (US based Tour which is the most valuable in terms of prize money) (PGA Tour 2013a) and 9 players in the top 100 of the world golf rankings (PGA Tour 2013b).

In terms of the women's game, the statistics are more challenging, there were 14 English women in the top 100 on the European Tour (LET 2013), 1 in the top 100 on the LPGA (US based Tour which is most valuable in terms of prize money) (LPGA 2013) and only 1 player in the top 100 of the world rankings (Rolex Rankings 2013). The women's game has seen the

emergence of players from Asia in general, and Korea in particular, rise in recent years which has consequently left fewer places and room for English players; 40 of the worlds top 100 ranked women are from Korea (Rolex Rankings 2013). The natural result of this reduction of numbers at the top is dropout of most of those who set out to play golf for a living.

However, we should not assume that having made it to the pinnacle of performance that golfers or footballers could then enjoy the benefits of their position for very long. Footballers have the security of a contract that may last between 6 months and up to five years, but typically, 2-3 years, (McGillivray et al 2005). However, injury, loss of form and the inherent short term nature of the sport mean that employment and income are not secure. Roderick (2006a; 173) says that "professional football is a form of contingent employment...uncertainty is central to and is a built in characteristic of the experiences of players, for whom career advancement and attainment are never secure". In a golf context, there are no contracts for a period on a particular tour, but those who have won an event, are given an exemption to play on that tour for a number of years. Even with an exemption, loss of form and injury are still factors that can leave a golfer facing career oblivion at any time. In football parlance the phrase 'you are only as good as your last game' could be easily applied to golf where you may be 'only as good as your last round'. Football and golf (and indeed most sports) require what Gardner (2011) describes as 'kinesthetic intelligence' and there is no doubt that for both groups, the physical capital they have built will, in time, diminish. This combined with the constant labour surplus leads to feelings of pressure among the successful players as "the game is so cut throat and there is always someone coming along who is that bit better than you at doing your job" (Roderick 2006b; 253).

2.4.2 Sporting dreams, optimism and reality

Typically young people who want to succeed as a performance athlete in any sport tend to specialise during school age or upon leaving school, and usually devote large amounts of time to play, practise and other associated activities; McGillivray et al (2005) note that within their study of Scottish professional footballers, 65% had left school by the age of 16, and 93% had left school by the age of 17. This level of focus and concentration on sport at all costs is exacerbated and fed by the fact that as well as huge financial rewards, elite sport attracts enormous publicity, media attention and dictates that the individuals live lives befitting of celebratory idols (McGillivray et al 2005) who are "heroes for people worldwide" (Roderick 2006a; 1). This is a heady mix and one that McGillivray et al (2005) say is added to by the culture of sports systems that has led to young athletes being deceived with optimism.

In terms of the AASE programme studied here, the list of past AASE athletes championed include Rebecca Adlington, Jack Wilshere and Sarah Stevenson and this perhaps gives the impression that an Olympic gold medal or Premiership fame and fortune are achievable outcomes (Skills Active 2014c). However, the truth is that "most students attending sports institutions will not make an adequate living from their sport" (David 2005; 147). It would seem logical then that the education that sports students receive should be sufficient to allow to transition to another career if the sport route is not successful (David 2005). However, for the majority of (football) trainees "dreams of footballing success far outweighed issues of post-career vocational planning in terms of lifestyle prioritisation" and college attendance was not viewed in a positive light but as a chance to upgrade self-identity and masculine prowess (Parker 2000b; 74).

A different cultural backdrop was identified in a study of Danish football 'talents' – 15-19 year olds who were attached to a football club with the aim of earning a professional contract (Christensen and Sørensen 2009). Although the young 'talents' were attracted by the prospect of a professional career and contract, there was also a strong cultural norm that education was important and worthwhile. This culture manifested itself in the approach of 'Team Danmark' who had overall responsibility for the development of talent across sport. Their belief was that they should be developing the complete sports person and that it is "essential that opportunities for flexible employment, education and training continue to be offered" (Christensen and Sørensen 2009; 117). This approach of developing the whole person, and in so doing including education as part of the package, had the effect of adding a secondary priority to the lives of these young people instead of having to choose between the two (Christensen and Sørensen 2009). As such, these football talents were somewhat more committed to education than their British counterparts, but this just served to put more pressure and demands on their time often resulting in "significant personal concerns, lower examination results, stress, drop-out and mental breakdown" (Christensen and Sørensen 2009; 115).

The consequence of the attractiveness of sport is that despite large numbers who aspire to 'make it', it is only the minority who do; when players come to this realisation, by whatever means and often mediated by critical episodes, there is very little to fall back on in terms of an alternative careers as education and qualifications have been abandoned some time before (David 2005). In 2002 within Scottish professional football more than a third of the professionals employed that season (over 500 individuals) did not have their contracts renewed the following year (McGillivray et al 2005). However, these issues go much deeper and lower down the pathway than those already employed in professional sport. The numbers

of individuals who are part of a talent pathway or are making their own way without any support are large in number and most probably will not make it to the professional ranks. In this regard, in a football context, only a quarter of the football apprentices in England will make it to the professional ranks (Monk 2000). In many ways, the culture of sport embraces this as sports clubs, coaches, talent pathways and national governing bodies all require large numbers of talented and motivated young people to fill and propagate the talent pool and maintain or improve the standing and popularity of the sport in question. The result of this trend has led to large numbers of young people dropping out of the educational system as soon as they can, or as soon as parents will allow, in order to focus on their sport. Often parents, as well as young people, perceive that complete focus on sport is the only way to be successful: "the dominant narrative or discourse within sporting contexts is one which demands that elite athletes – indeed *any* athletes who wish to be successful – must dedicate their lives to training, preparation, and competition" (Douglas and Carless 2008; 12). This attitude may also be prevalent among coaches, although for very different reasons; individuals who make pursuing their performance goals their only activity will potentially require more time with the coach and therefore generate more income. In the modern labour market, employability is bound up with the possession of human capital by means of skills and qualifications and without these, gaining employment is more difficult (McGillivray and McIntosh 2006). When this perspective is added to by the inevitable demise of the physical capital, in terms of sporting prowess, then the education of those involved in sport seems an obvious need.

2.4.3 Athlete education within sports performance programmes

A proposed antidote to the situation outlined above has been the development of a number of programmes, across various sports, which attempt to provide education for athletes as a safety net. In so doing, these programmes aim to deliver outcomes in both sport and education, two seemingly polarised entities. Structural elements of society are encountered by the individuals within them who, to some degree have the agency and free will to interact with them or not, to conform to them, or to a degree, to misbehave and to rebel against education. These education programmes have often attempted to smooth the path to alternative career choices for both young performers involved in talent pathways that will not make it, as well as for the lucky few who do make it to professional ranks, but for whom the career span of performance is short, even if relatively lucrative.

In different sports the development of this education has come from various organisations. In football pre 1995, there was little provision of education and what existed was ad hoc in nature (Platts and Smith 2009). In 1995 the Youth Training initiative came into being which sought to provide football trainees with education at the behest of the Professional Footballers Association (PFA) and Scottish Professional Footballers Association (SFA) along with Football Associations. The PFA and SFA are effectively the trade unions of professional footballers and their reasons for these developments were to provide for the best interests of their members; "the trade unions now direct much of their effort (and finance) towards the preparation of professional players for a post-football identity" (McGillivray et al 2005; 103).

In football, although its stars are contemporary heroes and the game is very high profile, not much is known about the inner-workings of the game (Parker 1995). Research was undertaken which sought to examine the issues of football trainees and their journey in football including their experiences of the educational offer (Parker 1995). This research was based on the 1993/94 football season at the football league club 'Colby Town'. Football trainees viewed professional contracts and play as inevitable and therefore many dismissed the idea of any educational pursuit as pointless, they "disassociated themselves from the process of secondary education, investing instead in a form of 'anticipatory socialisation' with regard to their desired career goals" (Parker 2000a; 62).

In attempting to understand these footballer trainees, it was noted that nearly all came from broadly working class backgrounds and that this correlates with existing sociological findings which indicate that working class youths frequently employ disaffected attitudes towards education as they fail to "connect fully with the middle class codes upon which it is allegedly based" (Parker 2000a; 62). These attitudes may well be linked to the development of a (working class) masculine identity and physical and manual work post-school and this might be said to be mirrored by the masculinised nature of football (McGillivray et al 2005). McGillivray et al (2005; 106) also found that the footballers in their research generally came from working class (and low income) backgrounds and used the concept of habitus to help illustrate how the education system reproduces social relations. They claim that the habitus of the working class show a relatively poor perception of the value of schooling; "academic pathways are deemed unthinkable". Added to this, parents from working class backgrounds who have more limited levels and experiences of educational cultural capital are likely to have this perception perpetuated by social convention; the status of social class and background have a particular and long lasting effect on peoples' lives and hence their life

chances (McGillivray et al 2005). These issues make the alliance of sport and education even more problematic from a football viewpoint. In contrast, "the children of those who have occupied relatively privileged social class positions are more likely to share the values, dispositions, and cultural capital of the school" (McGillivray et al 2005; 105). Perhaps this differentiation by social class is a peculiarly British phenomenon. In their analysis of Danish footballing talents it was found that the cultural norm was that education was valued by aspiring performers, including footballers to some degree, across many sports in Denmark; "academic qualifications are both an espoused value and a basic underlying assumption of Danish society" (Christensen and Sørensen 2009; 122). This meant that to a degree, the focus on sport was diluted by at least some focus on educational attainment. There was some feeling among these young talents though, that making it as a footballers required "giving it 100%" (Christensen and Sørensen 2009; 122); that time spent following an educational agenda was time, if not wasted, taking resources away from football.

Football trainees at Colby Town were given day release to pursue their studies and were classified in terms of their academic status; the more 'academic' trainees completed a BTEC National Certificate in Leisure and Tourism or Business and Finance (Parker 2000). Those with worse grades followed a City and Guilds Certificate in similar subjects, while the few who had five or more GCSE s at grade A or B had 'A' levels as an option. Like their Danish counterparts, these football trainees also saw education as just one of a number of trivial activities which, from a UK perspective, included domestic duties, and underlined the trainee status as inferior in terms of the football club as a whole (Parker 2000b). Indeed, this status is similar to that of PGA Trainees because these individuals have to work as the 'junior' in the club shop and are expected to fulfil menial tasks usually on the minimum wage (Parker 2000b). The popularity of football in Britain "has led young recruits to accept notions of

sporting grandeur over and above less attractive and more probable career outcomes"; in previous years before education programmes, footballers would be "condemned to the stereotypical expectancies of street side newsagent or pub landlord" (Parker 2000a; 63). In golf at least there is an option to be retained in the game by undertaking PGA training to become a PGA Professional, typically working in a club and still able to enjoy playing competitively, albeit, at a lower level than the 'tour' and their early career ambitions.

Before many of the football trainees started at Colby Town, they had already lost interest in academia and study because when they knew that they would be starting with the club in the comings months, motivation waned (Parker 2000b). There may be some parallels here with AASE students as the academic 'bar' to access this course was not high and did not really stretch the students to achieve the highest grades possible. Many parents (particularly mothers) that Parker spoke to were concerned with the effect the amount of time playing for various teams had already had on their sons before they got to Colby. However, there were three notable exceptions, 'Paul', 'Pete' and 'Gary'. These trainees were known as the 'brains' of the group. They had good GCSE grades and were pursuing the 'A' level route at Colby where their intention was to "fully utilise the educational facilities and services on offer to them and to attain a series of qualifications thereby safeguarding against the inevitability of career termination" (Parker 2000b; 67). However, for most of the group, education and schooling "represented metaphors for occupational failure" (Parker 2000b; 67) and these attitudes led to various behavioural contradictions and tensions which were especially apparent when the trainees were on day-release at college. Trainees were divided into two groups, the "brainy bastards" and the "thick cunts" (Parker 2000b; 69). The brainy bastards generally behaved well within their group maintaining a "studious and calm aura", the thick cunts ignored the teachers for the majority of the time, instead spending their time discussing

"issues ranging from sexual endeavour to the micro-politics of club loyalty" (Parker 2000b; 69). Even when footballers reach the last years of their careers, there appears to be little interest and up take of educational opportunities; there was little knowledge of alternative educational and career options among footballers which served to reinforce the position of the game and the club (McGillivray et al 2005).

In sharp contrast the Danish system in which education is an accepted part of culture and the way sport is administered through Team Danmark, does highlight that a system can exist in which education can sit side by side with sport. However, this may be perceived to deflect the commitment of these athletes many of whom, along with coaches, believe that sport requires a total focus and any compromise away from this ideal must be a compromise that limits potential; Danish football talents have to "balance their relations with two central forces in their everyday lives that are often fraught with conflict" (Christensen and Sørensen 2009; 116). These findings are similar to those reported by Cosh and Tully (2014; 180) whose study of Australian athletes, from a variety of sports, reported that they undertook education in a grudging way with the attitude that "all I have to do is pass". Like Christensen and Sorenson (2009), Cosh and Tully found that education was seen as a distraction, but something that individuals were expected to undertake. This had the effect of a perception of lack of time and focus for their main outcome that of playing and reaching their potential in their chosen sport, and so education was sacrificed to prioritise sport.

The effect of education programmes within football (in the UK) have been found to be marginal and the quality variable and this may be due to some extent that "there exists a widespread belief that a desire to do well academically is to accept they may have no future in football" (Platts and Smith 2009; 336). This is in line with Parker's (2000b; 67) assertion

that “education and schooling represented sub-culture metaphors for occupational failure”. These cultural constraints are further entrenched by the growing commercialism, Europeanisation and globalisation of the game that increase the importance of success on the pitch, often at the cost of matters off the pitch, including education (Platts and Smith 2009).

In the late 1990s football Youth Training schemes were replaced with Modern Apprenticeships partly as government had expressed doubts concerning existing schemes (Platts and Smith 2009). These schemes became mandatory for football clubs by 1998, but there were a limited number of places at each club. This was because there was a perception that clubs were increasing the number of trainees they had in order to secure funding, but ultimately this actually led to more young footballers dropping out of the system and hence actually had a negative effect on the welfare of the individuals which the education was supposed to be safeguarding (Platts and Smith 2009).

In 2004 Skills Active in association with sporting National Governing Bodies and “industry experts”, developed the AASE programme that sought to “ensure top young athletes seeking to perform at the highest level receive the support and training they need to succeed in elite sport” (Skills Active 2014a). The programme, as previously described, covers twenty or so sports including football, rugby union, rowing boxing, tennis and swimming (Skills Active 2014b) and there are currently over 2500 individuals on the programme. The menu of education though is very similar to those described by Parker - BTEC National Certificate or BTEC National Diploma in a related subject were on offer as well as the chance to undertake an ‘A’ level should a student wish to ‘top up’ (EGU/EWGA 2009, Skills Active 2014d). In addition, AASE students undertake National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) which were designed to recognise work-based learning which reflected the “competencies required in

professional sport. It is designed to directly measure the students' ability to apply themselves to professional development in the technical, tactical, physical and psychological aspects of golf" (EGU/EWGA 2009; 5).

2.4.4 Golf and educational developments

Limited job security and longevity within sport make it a 'precarious profession' (Platts and Smith 2009); "professional football is a highly tenuous and unstable occupation" (Parker (2000a; 61). There is no doubt that golf could put into the same bracket as football in this regard. However in golf, unlike football, the move to develop education programmes has come from the governing body rather than the players' union or government. This development may have at least in part been attributable to self-interest (to access funding) as well as having the best interests of the individual at heart. Often the most motivated and regularly performing participants in sports include the young athletes who are aspiring to a career in that sport. Given the perilous nature of this pursuit, most will be lost from talent pathways and if they are not given exit routes that involve continued participation, they may be lost from sport for good. In the case of golf, those dropping out from the early stages of the talent pathway may go on to be club committee members, junior organisers, coaches, referees and advocates and thereby significantly contribute to the health and well-being of the sport.

In terms of education, sports governing bodies also wanted to be seen to be doing the right thing and acting responsibly in a wider context. The way golf decided to set up this support was through the AASE in Golf, funded through Skills Active. In establishing the AASE programme studied here, the EGU/EWGA wanted to encourage young people to continue

with their education and thus have more appeal for parents who may have been concerned about their child devoting too much time to golf performance as a sole pursuit. The EGU/EWGA also hoped that AASE would lead to a higher and better level of coaching experience for the participants; a centrally supported scheme where coaches could be overseen and standards monitored, which was thought to be preferable to a scenario in which a parent or the young golfer found and appointed a coach themselves. These motivations are similar to those of Team Danmark who sought to produce a talent pathway that positioned Denmark as "the best place in the world to be an athlete" (Christensen and Sørensen 2009; 116).

The England talent pathway, that builds towards at the elite end of the amateur game, has approximately 20 players at its pinnacle and around 2500 at the base of the pathway (see appendix 1 and 2). Almost all of those involved at the lower end of the England talent pathway drop out and do not make it to represent England at amateur level, never mind reaching professional ranks. It is also reasonable to suggest that outside this official pathway there are also large numbers of young people who want to play golf as a profession. From the pinnacle of the official amateur golf pathway, the probability of making it to world class, that is, the world top one hundred is even more challenging. As previously stated, Colclough (2010) found that from beginning to play golf to turning professional took approximately twelve and a half years and that from beginning to first major win took twenty one years. In espousing the AASE programme, EGU/EWGA (2009; 3), quote the then Director of Coaching at the EGU who said "the fact that a player can combine their studies with their golf into one almost seamless package is fantastic. Previously players would have to sacrifice their competitive and training schedules in order to study for exams in the middle of the competitive season, but with AASE the competitive season is part of their studies". In terms

of the coaching support for participants in AASE, EGU/EWGA (2009) list this as, a minimum sixty hours coaching sessions per year, two hundred and forty hours of supervised practice, individualised coaching programmes to suit the players needs, coaches that will work with the home coach where appropriate, sport psychology support, physiological and nutritional support and physical screening and feedback time. Also, EGU/EWGA (2009; 4) say, "players will be supported in managing their competitive schedules, and flexible arrangements will be made for players who are required to miss elements of college due to representative commitments". Although it does not say this in the literature, the governing bodies clearly want to give young people some educational grounding as most of the golfers who are in the England talent pathway will not make it to the next step up the ladder and so will need to find alternative career pathways and providing this opportunity may be viewed as a duty of care. It can be said that golf is widely regarded as a middle class sport due to numerous barriers to the working class, namely the costs of joining a club and buying the equipment, the historically elite nature of golf clubs (which are still prevalent today), as well as golf being built into middle class habitus. This may make the bridging of sport and education easier from a golf perspective.

2.5 Communities of practice

The concept of communities of practice was established and developed by Lave and Wenger (Lave and Wenger 1991) and provides a useful perspective on knowledge and learning. As such, a growing number of people and organisations in various sectors are now using a communities of practice approach to improving their performance (Schenkel and Teigland 2008). Communities of practice are formed by people who engage in a process of collective learning in a shared domain of human endeavour. Often these communities exist without a

formal recognition of the phenomenon or an acknowledgement of its benefit. Within the context of these communities, Lave and Wenger developed the idea of legitimate peripheral participation to describe how 'newcomers' become experienced members of a community. Over time, these newcomers become 'old timers' and their participation becomes more central to the function of the community. Within these communities and this participation, individuals learn many things including how to behave in the group (to help embed them in that community) as well as learning a particular skill or pursuing a particular expertise that the community is, or does, as a function. This learning then, is said to be situated in the context of the community and was classified by Lave and Wenger (2006) as situated learning.

Communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly, and there are three characteristics which are crucial for a community of practice to exist: Firstly, the domain: "A community of practice is not just a group of friends. It must have an identity defined by a shared 'domain' of concern. Membership implies a commitment to the domain, and therefore a shared competence that distinguishes members from other people. The domain is not necessarily something recognised as 'expertise' outside the community" (Wenger 2008; 1). The apprentice golfers within this thesis shared the domain of performance in golf. Secondly, the community: "In pursuing their interest in their domain, members engage in joint activities and discussions, help each other, and share information. They build relationships that enable them to learn from each other…But members of a community of practice do not necessarily work together on a daily basis" (Wenger 2008; 1). The apprentice golfers studied here took part in shared learning experiences both within educational and golf performance settings. Finally, the practice: "Members of a community of practice are practitioners. They develop a shared repertoire of resources: experiences, stories, tools, and ways of addressing recurring

problems - in short a shared practice. This takes time and sustained interaction…The development of a shared practice may be more or less self-conscious" (Wenger 2008; 1-2). Apprentice golfers performed together and against each other within a competitive golf context, they also spent many hours practicing their golf skills together both within formal squad sessions and informal practice. The development of a community of practice can provide many learning opportunities for participants: problem solving, shared information, shared experience, re-using assets or information, coordination and synergy, discussing developments, testing new theories or ideas and best practice can develop (Lave and Wenger 2006); all these activities also and concurrently act to socialise members of the group with each other and strengthen and legitimise the group.

An obvious delineation within a communities of practice approach to sport, is the separate communities of coaches and players. These two groups are distinct and the way in which they interact and develop is an important area to investigate (Galipeau and Trudel 2006). There is a significant amount of research regarding how groups of coaches interact and work in and with communities of practice to build knowledge and expertise (Cassidy and Rossi 2006, Colclough 2009, Rynne et al 2010, Cushion and Denstone 2011 and Stoszkowski and Collins 2012). Coaches perceive that the majority of their personal development is achieved by informal and non-formal means often facilitated through communities of practice (Stoszkowski and Collins 2012). It is thought that this learning should complement formal learning opportunities (Bertram and Gilbert 2011). Denstone (Cushion and Denstone 2011) says that "I have assimilated values, beliefs, an extensive subject knowledge base and good coaching practice not only from more experienced and qualified practitioners; even the most inexperienced or newly qualified practitioner has contributed to my personal learning. As

coaches, we should also acknowledge that each interaction with our athletes might provide a significant developmental opportunity" (Cushion and Denstone 2011; 104).

Another way in which coaches are involved in communities of practice is the interaction they have with players, individually and in squads and or groups. Cushion and Denstone (2011; 106) say that "coaching is a social activity, and the coaching practice, that is the interaction of coach athlete and context, is a reference point through which individuals (coaches and athletes) give meaning to their activities and manage their identities". Coaching practice is the setting where players, coaches, contexts and programs diverge and where rules, behaviour, skills and learning take place amid the coaching 'social milieu' that Stoszkowski and Collins (2012) describe; the lens of communities of practice therefore seems a good way to examine these coaching intricacies including from a golf perspective where performance squads and group coaching are prevalent.

2.5.1 Legitimate peripheral participation

Legitimate peripheral participation is learning how to become part of a community of practice, or put another way, social co-participation within a community of practice (Lave and Wenger 1991). Learning is always situated somewhere and social engagement provides the context for learning. Learning is a way of being in the social world not a way of coming to know (Lave and Wenger, 2006). Legitimate peripheral participation is a way of learning the rules of this social context and thus moving from the periphery to the centre as this happens. By this token, full participation implies that all the rules have been learned, but as

the community of practice is a constantly evolving entity, members are continually learning new practices. Learners are thus apprentices in the given contexts – life itself is an apprenticeship, to learn 'how things are done round here'. Apprentice and apprenticeship can therefore be synonyms for situated learning (Lave and Wenger 1991).

Lave and Wenger (2006; 40) say that legitimate peripheral participation is an "analytical viewpoint on learning, a way of understanding learning" and not something that can be implemented or operationalised, but rather something that is just there. Social practice is an environment for learning whereas conventional education theories would suggest that individuals internalise information whether transmitted from others or discovered. In stark contrast to this internalisation theory, participation in a community of practice concerns the whole person acting in the world (Lave and Wenger 2006).

The changing nature of groups and the processes of learning can really only be viewed from a social perspective and thus is another reason to adopt a community of practice lens through which to interpret the data generated in this study. Members of a group naturally change and move on and indeed the self-renewing nature of a community serves to bring about the transformation that is, unfortunately, difficult to characterise; a community of practice is therefore a generative process that produces its own future. These reproductive processes "leave a trail of artefacts, physical, linguistic, and symbolic" (Lave and Wenger 2006; 58). These processes are constantly changing, evolving, learning, updating, socialising and of course this is problematic. Any attempt to analyse a form of learning through legitimate peripheral participation must take account of political, social, historical factors and their effects on the possibilities of learning (Lave and Wenger 2006).

Learning is situated in the trajectories of participation in which it takes on meaning and these trajectories are situated in the social world; "the concept of legitimate peripheral participation obtains its meaning, not in a concise definition of its boundaries, but in its multiple, theoretically generative interconnections with persons, activities, knowing and world" (Lave and Wenger 2006; 121). Lave and Wenger (2006; 121) say that "Legitimate peripheral participation has led us to emphasise the sustained character of developmental cycles of communities of practice, the gradual process of fashioning relations of identity as a full practitioner, and the enduring strains inherent in the continuity-displacement contradiction". This concept of what it means to learn comes much closer to embracing the rich significance of learning in human experience. In this way the person is a practitioner whose changing knowledge, experience and skills, are all part of an identity that is evolving and developing; part of a community of practice on a novice to expert journey.

2.5.2 Situated learning

Situated learning may be described as learning whilst undertaking an activity within a particular context and culture: learning and application within the same environment. These theories will be used in the context of a golf setting to help describe, depict and illustrate how the participants behave and learn. An exploration of the nature of community of practice and the social construction in this golf context is valid based on the assertion that "human minds develop in social situations" (Lave and Wenger 2006; 11). Lave and Wenger emphasise the socially mediated character of learning (legitimate peripheral participation) and go on to identify that the mastery of knowledge and skills requires participants to move towards "full participation in the sociocultural practices of a community" (Lave and Wenger 2006; 29) and that this social process includes, and sometimes subsumes, the learning of skills therein.

Learning and social practice are integral and inseparable: “We are social beings. Far from being trivially true, this fact is a central aspect of learning” (Wenger 2005; 4). These communities are in a constant state of flux and evolve over time. Wenger et al (2002) say that communities progress through five stages of development: potential, coalescing, maturing, stewardship and transformation. That said, a community’s development is rarely smooth and frequently involves discoveries, transitions, and learning through experience. Leaders within groups are of key importance here and their role is pivotal in how the communities develop.

Apprenticeships have been described in many historical traditions all over the world and they are especially prevalent in areas where high levels of skill are involved such as “medicine, law, professional sports, and the arts” (Lave and Wenger 2006; 63). Learning is an integral and inseparable aspect of social practice, but what characterizes this in the golf lesson/educational situation? As the apprentice golfers in AASE go through the course, they are changing as individuals and therefore their communities of practice change and evolve. As such, all activity is situated and thus framed by social rules and norms and this includes the lives of all the participants in this study (Lave and Wenger 2006).

Situated learning is now considered as transitory, meaning that one can learn ‘how things are done around here’, but acknowledging that this practice is continuously developing and evolving. The peripheral element of this means simply that no one is included in every interaction with the community of practice, and also that there is no place called the periphery, but rather that peripheral participation may well lead to full participation but that this does not mean participation in all, just full participation within the group. ‘Peripheral’ is

also a positive term in that it is the only way to get to full participation and inclusion; it is just that an individual will have to 'work their way in' (Lave and Wenger 2006).

The theory of situated learning has previously been used in sport to investigate, for example, the study of young elite footballers in Denmark (Christensen et al 2011). This study identified two distinct groups: a smaller discreet group of 'position specific' footballers and the larger 'whole team' group. The smaller group was found to offer better support in terms of their long-term development as footballers, where the larger, and perhaps more structural 'team group' was less effective in this regard. It seems that the smaller, former group was more successful in supporting individuals when they transitioned from new-boys to old-timers. This would suggest that knowing is inherent and is located in the relations among practitioners, and this is best achieved when group members choose each other, rather than are forced together in the community of the whole team. This should not be a surprise as the interaction takes place "in a social world, dialectically constituted in social practices that are in the process of reproduction, transformation and change" (Lave and Wenger 2006; 123) and as such the social bonds and groups formed informally are likely to be strong.

2.6 Coaching

2.6.1 Coaching pedagogy

Historically, coaching development programmes have failed to highlight the human interaction of coach and pupil (Potrac and Jones 1999, Jones et al 2002, Purdy et al 2008, Mathews et al 2013). Instead there has been a concentration on the 'science' of the process, rather than the 'art' of coaching. Indeed, the coaching process may, in some ways, be

constrained and under pressure from social issues (Potrac and Jones 1999). Research into the coaching process has tended to concentrate on bio-scientific aspects and, as such, has failed to fully explore and understand the "essential humanistic, social nature of the process" (Jones 2000; 34). This may be due to what Potrac et al (2002) describe as the 'product-orientated' view of coaching. This approach presents coaching as an almost independent body of information that should be passed on by a facilitator - the coach merely acting as a technician in the transfer of knowledge. Coach education and development is often theoretical, and not practical, in nature, and according to Jones (2000) this leads to the production of two-dimensional coaches who focus on technical matters and have difficulty in adapting to human interaction (Jones 2000). Coaches should be perhaps more than mere technicians with personal skills and values such as reflection, collaboration and communication (MacDonald and Tinning 1995). Indeed, the interpersonal nature of coaching is the most essential feature of coaching practice that needs to be addressed if coaching is to be successful (Potrac and Purdy 2004). However, "Despite the recent increase of research into coaching, the essential social and cultural nature of the process has received little attention" (Jones et al 2002; 34). As such, coach education programmes have historically failed to reflect sociological realities, although Matthews et al (2013) say that is beginning to change; some coach education programmes do cover some issues such as child protection, but the more intangible areas such as social networks and organisational culture are still not addressed. It appears then that there remains much to be done to promote social issues in coaching and part of the problem in doing so is the relative difficulty of selling the benefits thereof (Matthews et al 2013).

It is the contention of the authors above that if coach education programmes reflected social realities and involved the social being, coaches could better understand their own socialisation and that of others, including participants. The coaches own journeys could be explored and deconstructed and a "base from which to critically evaluate social situations and

the behaviour of others" (Jones 2000; 40) could be established. It is argued that coaches therefore need enlightenment and educating within the social milieu in which they operate; this would result in more socially informed decision-making and improved social relations (Lyle 2002). With this in mind, Jones (2000) suggests that successful and professional practice must encompass technical competence, but also flexibility, creativity, intelligence and social responsibility. This should lead to what Lyle (2002) feels would be a better understanding of interpersonal relationships, development of reflexive practitioners, and enhanced personal development. Taking this one stage further, Armour and Jones (2000) suggest that 'putting the person before the body' is essential to fully realising an athletes potential and is therefore of paramount importance. Bloom (2002) argues that coaches who are involved in teaching young people also have the added responsibility in the development of future citizens and therefore societies and so these issues should be approached far more proactively. To summarise, Armour and Jones (2000; 8) say that "It is only the individual [coach] who understands social settings in a thoroughly practical way who can possibly mediate tensions and overcome difficulties" and in so doing is a powerful and important agent within the coaching process.

2.6.2 Developments in coaching

Recent developments in coaching within the UK have aimed to address and improve coaching standards and consequently attend to some of the issues outlined above (Bolton and Smith 2013). These developments have also come about because of the "realisation of the strategic importance of high quality coaching to the achievement of national sport policy objectives" (Piggott 2013; 1). The practical implication for coaching has been the move towards 'professionalisation' (MacLean and Pritchard 2013). The catalyst for this

development was the publication of 'A Sporting Future for All' (Department of Culture Media and Sport 2000) a paper which outlines the government assertion that coaching should be at integral to the development of sport; "the training of high quality coaches...sits at the heart of the government's plans" (Department of Culture Media and Sport 2008a; 15). Increased participation in sport was a major priority of the government, with potential benefits such as enjoyment, personal development, citizenship, improved health, education and inclusivity all being central to the scheme (North 2007). These potential benefits encompass many government outcomes and as such had a wider social and economic impact (Bolton and Smith 2013). In 2008 'Playing to Win' was published (Department of Culture Media and Sport 2008b), which signalled a shift from 'sport for good' to 'sport for sport's sake' (Bolton and Smith 2013). Against this backdrop, and initially instigated by 'A Sporting Future for All', a Coaching Task Force was set up to undertake a detailed review of sports coaching (Bolton and Smith 2013). As a result of this review, sports coach UK was charged with examining issues relating to the content and consistency of coaching qualifications. This work led to the establishment of the United Kingdom Coaching Certificate (UKCC) and the UK Coaching Framework. The UK Coaching Framework (sports coach UK 2008; 11) set out with the vision to "create a cohesive, ethical, inclusive and valued coaching system where skilled coaches support children, players and athletes at all stages of their development and is world-leading by 2016". This framework was formulated over a period of time, building on the work of the Coaching Taskforce as well as sports councils and some national governing bodies (Bolton and Smith 2013).

The introduction of the UKCC framework led to new and updated coaching qualifications. Ultimately it was decided there should be four levels of coaching qualification to align with European standards. Sports coach UK led on the framework for these developments and this

has included the facilitation of best practice and knowledge across the sports. Notably, core standards were included across qualifications in different sports in order that coaches could easily move between home countries as well as from sport to sport. Marketing Opinion and Research International (MORI) undertook extensive monitoring of the progress of UKCC and this research concluded that the benefits included the better definition of coaching roles, the standardisation of coach education and qualifications and the raising of the profile of coaching (Bolton and Smith 2013). However, they also identified that these developments had placed significant pressure on lead officers within national governing bodies and led to poor networking between sports. Numerous research papers have suggested that coaches feel that these newly developed coaching qualifications are "expensive, inflexible and overly technical and therefore has little real impact on coaching practice" (Piggott 2013; 1). Formal education may only make up one part of coach learning, which Trudel et al (2013) say also includes other formal education opportunities as well as a myriad of informal learning situations. The perceived value of formal versus informal learning does seem to vary over time; more inexperienced coaches are more likely to find formal opportunities more valuable whereas more expert coaches tend to value the informal to a greater degree (Piggott 2013).

For golf, the development of the UKCC "represented a major change in both the range of coaches delivering golf, the nature of coach education and the way golf coaching is developed as a profession" (Phillpots 2007; 167). UKCC endorsed qualifications at levels 1 to 4 were in place for golf in 2013, and these reflect the PGAs 21st century vision for coaching '*Right Coach, Right Place, Right Time'* (PGA 2013), which sets out to ensure that every coach has the knowledge, skills and attributes to support a broad range of golfers of varying abilities. It was hoped that this vision would ensure: "more people playing golf, more people achieving their golfing potential, more people retained in golf and better performances

on a world stage" (PGA 2013). Practically speaking, these developments have resulted in the inclusion of a wide range of content, not simply the rather narrow technical model that has previously been taught. This is a function of the change of culture that the vision set out to achieve, that is, moving away from a technical model that coaches pass on, but rather to up-skill the coach to meet the needs of the golfer whatever these might be; a participant, rather than coach, centred approach. It is clear that understanding the person and meeting their wants and needs was central to golf coach education in the UK, although there were challenges in communicating this to, and educating, the existing workforce who may or may not have been active in their approach to continuous professional development.

2.6.3 Coaching: processes and practices

The complexities of the coaching domain such as rationale, program design, teaching and learning (Armour 2004) are such that the term 'coaching pedagogy' does not sufficiently describe the area. Due to this complexity, coaching practice should be examined in an orderly and organised manner and according to Lyle (2002) should cover areas such as expertise, planned actions, management of the process, and decision-making based on established principles and good practice. As such coaching can be described as a "diverse and demanding occupation that requires a high level of physical and mental vigour on the part of the practitioners" (Jones et al 2004; 163).

The essence of coaching can said to be the interaction between coach and athlete: "it is this interaction that generates athlete learning and relates how coach and athlete connect, correlate, bond and generally 'get on' with each other" (Jones 2004b; 135). The skills and qualities of the coach should reflect this interaction and, according to Lyle (2002), could

include development in areas such as communication, social relationships, intervention style, decision-making, leadership, rewards and goal management. The interpersonal nature of coaching means that the process can have a myriad of effects on participants and hence participation. 'Good' coaching can lead to enjoyment, the maximisation of personal potential and life-long participation whereas 'poor' coaching can lead to dropout and damage participation and engagement in sport and physical activity (North 2007).

The coach acts as a powerful socialising agent within sport (Cassidy et al 2006) and as such the quality of the coach-participant relationship is critical to positive outcomes: "coaches influence the effects that sport participation has on children through the interpersonal behaviours they engage in, the values and attitudes they transmit both verbally and through example, and the goal priorities they establish" (Smith and Smoll 2002; 211). As such, the coach is in a unique position in regard to a child's social development; areas like co-operation, assertion, responsibility, empathy and self-control can be positively affected (Côté 2002). Lyle (2002; 191) asserts, "just as with any other social phenomenon, sports coaching practice will have been shaped by the social structures, power relationships and social trends and will, in turn, have contributed to those emerging social patterns". However, "it is difficult to compartmentalise the role of the coach neatly, as such a complex job cannot realistically be broken down in a clinical way" (Jones 2004a; 133). The human interaction involved is the very essence of coaching, and athlete learning and development is dependent upon it. Coaching is then a complex and intricate endeavour based on human interaction and communication; "ultimately, coaching is a social endeavour, and while sport-specific, organisational, physiological and psychological tools are necessary, if the coaches lack the sensitivity to act appropriately within a dynamic social and educational environment, they

can struggle to achieve their intentions of improving the quality of both performance and participation" (Cassidy et al 2006; 3).

Historically, knowledge and the timely delivery of this knowledge in a formulaic sequence, has been thought of as all-important for effective coaching (Jones 2006b). This of course suggests that the knowledge is more important than interpretation and indeed than understanding the participant. However, in recent years there has been a move towards coaching in a more socially informed way. The term 'holistic coaching' has been adopted in golf to not only describe coaching numerous of elements of the game, but also to treating the person as a whole with their individual wants and needs.

With this in mind, it has been suggested that the preparation of coaches needs to be upgraded and incorporated into a continuous professional development programme that includes lifetime learning (Jones 2006). This is clearly the case for the PGA which has recently updated the content of coaching qualifications as well as having a comprehensive professional development programme. Indeed, the Department of Culture Media and Sport (2008b) White Paper on Sport praised the model of education and development in golf and suggested other sports should undertake similar work.

2.6.4 Reflective coaching

A vital component in building expertise in coaching is reflection (Cassidy et al 2006, Gilbourne et al 2013). A reflective coach is able to understand themselves and "their own socialisation and that of others and deconstruct their own assumptions; a critical

consciousness of their constructed worlds allows a base from which to critically evaluate social situations and the behaviour of others" (Jones 2000; 40). This reflection could lead to a better understanding of interpersonal relationships and enhanced personal development, thus leading to greater expertise (Lyle 2002). Reflective practice, and not simply the repetition of prescribed technical knowledge, is essential in order to maintain good practice, indeed, Gilbert and Trudel (2006; 114) claim that "ten years of coaching without reflection is simply one year of coaching repeated ten times". A lack of professional development can therefore lead to 'mindless' coaching which is often manifested in a lack of knowledge and understanding regarding athletes learning, and of the complex and dynamic environment of coaching (Cassidy et al 2006).

Coaches should be open-minded and have the capability to develop themselves over time: this process is greatly aided and enabled by self-reflection and adds to the overall quality of coaching (Potrac and Cassidy 2006). This may lead coaches to be more sensitive to the background, needs and interests of the participant and that should "result in better and more inclusive coaching, leading to enhanced athlete learning and therefore performance" (Cassidy et al 2006; 18). In a modern coaching environment where coaches and sport are increasingly being used as agents of positive societal change, the reflective practices of the coach become even more powerful and important (Gilbourne et al 2013). However, most coach education programmes do not actively nurture or teach reflective skills and do not focus on expert teaching practices (Schempp et al 2004): these are some of the areas that the UKCC developments have sought to address (sports coach UK, 2013).

2.6.5 Coaching expertise

The level of academic understanding regarding sports coaching remains relatively low but this could be explained by the complex nature of the endeavour. Coaches should be considered educators and coaching as a complex pedagogical process (Wikeley and Bullock 2006). Learning takes place within situational constraints and this suggests that the situated learning of each individual is set against the backdrop of their relationship with the coach (Jones 2006a). As such, coaching is a complex endeavour; practice should be reflected upon by the coach to better understand himself or herself, but also to better understand the participant. In terms of coaching expertise, "becoming an expert teacher requires extensive knowledge and years of experience" (Schempp et al 2007; 187). However, the benefit of this complexity is that it can enrich the coaching process by giving the opportunity to reflect upon practice in new ways (Jones 2006a).

2.6.6 Coach as more capable other

Historically the athlete would have been held responsible for poor performance and the coaches' role in preparing the athlete has largely been downplayed (Potrac and Cassidy 2006). Coaches have not been afforded the opportunity to explore how their coaching is perceived from the perspective of the athlete, how athletes understand what they are learning and how athletes learn things which are new to them – that is, the social aspect of how these things are communicated and performed is a key part of the process. This means that the coach and coaching process needs to become more than a one way download of information; the coach needs to "engage in contextual collaborative and learning relationships with

athletes if…maximal sporting performance are to be fully developed" (Potrac and Cassidy 2006; 40) and in so doing become the more capable other.

The use of direct instruction, which simply requires the athlete to follow these instructions, does not lead to any cognitive development (Potrac and Jones 2009). This is a historical teaching theory that relies greatly on the prescriptive approach, where the coach is regarded as the sole source of knowledge. This may have led to a 'robotic' approach by athletes and an abdication of responsibility – 'I'm just doing what the coach told me to do'. However, the coach needs to assist the athlete develop cognitively and therefore needs to be an educator – to draw out knowledge and understanding – not just to download information (Wikeley and Bullock 2006). Learning is both an active and social process where the coach should incorporate guided discovery in their delivery (Potrac and Cassidy 2006). This type of approach, that is, learning-centred is valuable in encouraging athletes to engage actively and to take responsibility for their own learning (Potrac and Cassidy 2006). The concept of the coach as the more capable other is thus played out. As a strategy to aid this process, open-ended questioning can lead to the athlete making original contributions which can add to the knowledge and understanding, challenge their standpoint and deepen their knowledge (Wikeley and Bullock 2006). In short, the coach needs to listen closely and to interpret carefully. The coach must remain open and ready to consider all points of view as not all athletes react in the same way to a coaching plan and that every coaching context has its own unique feel and cultural dynamic (Jones and Wallace 2006). The position of the coach, then, is integral and laden with inherent power. As such the approach of the coach must be ethical in nature, however, "coaches work with people not machines; consequently most if not all, coaching exchanges have a moral dimension to them" (Hardman and Jones 2013; 114). As

such, coaching could be said to be a moral practice and, given the position of the coach as more capable other, it should be incumbent upon them to act and behave ethically.

2.6.7 Coaching, interpersonal relationships and complexity

There has been a tendency for coaching to be represented as "an apolitical, unemotional and rationalistic activity underpinned by technical, tactical and bio-scientific knowledge and methods" (Toner et al 2012; 67). However, the coach could do much more than this. Douglas and Carless (2008) assert that coaches should consider an individual's social, psychological, spiritual, emotional, and cultural development and thus use a person-centred approach. One of the advantages of this approach, as observed in the delivery of expert coaches, is that they often engaged in many non-training related behaviours such as dealing with athletes personal concerns that were crucial for athlete development (Joseph 2010). These non-technical factors and roles, the interpersonal element of coaching, make it a complex pursuit undertaken with, and between, athlete and coach together. However, there is little in the way of informing research that presents the implications for coaching and coach education for this somewhat humanistic approach to learning and educational practice (Nelson et al 2012). What can be said is that coaching is a social activity and the interaction of coaches and athletes is for mutual benefit (Occhino et al 2013). Effective coaching, and as part of this, successful interpersonal relationships, are beneficial in two specific ways. Firstly, after the initial involvement in sport, one of the biggest influences on continued participation and development may be how comfortable the performers feels in the environment created and managed by the coach (Woods 2011). Indeed, the interaction of coach and athlete defines the quality of the relationship and is a major predictor of the quality of coaching and participation (Jowett and Poczwardowski 2007). Secondly, successful interpersonal relationships make it

more likely that athletes reach their potential and perform as well as they can. In his own elite golf performance, Toner (Toner et al 2012) states that his stubbornness to provide the coach with some critical pieces of information, ultimately led to frustration, poor performance and eventually a breakdown of the relationship with the coach. Toner was testing out the coach and not working with him, failing to communicate effectively over a sustained period, and this lack of a quality relationship between them was the critical factor in poor performance (Toner et al 2012).

A good relationship between coach and athlete is aided by the development of rapport. In their study looking at effective coaching behaviour, Baker et al (2003) found 'personal rapport' among seven coaching behaviours that influenced coach satisfaction. In building up a picture of what this rapport may be made up of, Cook and Poole (2011) list aspects of a good coach as: being positive, enthusiastic, supportive, trusting, focused, goal oriented, knowledgeable, observant, respectful, patient, clear and assertive. Alternatively, and from a performance perspective, Jowett and Cockerill (2003) when studying a group of Olympic medallists suggested that important aspects of coach-athlete relations are trust, respectfulness and support. In summary, this area can be said to involve a person-centred approach to coaching which should be undertaken in a holistic way. Coaching holistically means that the coach adopts an approach whereby knowledge from a number of areas is integrated with technical competencies rather than compartmentalised (Douglas and Carless 2008). In this regard, "to coach holistically is to draw on many knowledge sources and considerations, and to decide, with insight, how to amalgamate and utilise them, in what fashion, when and where, to the benefit of those being coached" (Jones and Turner 2006; 184). Therefore coaching the whole person may require a culture shift for certain coaches and sports, especially sports, like golf, which are traditionally seen as technically heavy. This may be

particularly challenging for established coaches who "being well educated in technical, technological, biomechanical and physiological needs of the performers, are likely to have received less formal education concerning the broader development needs" (Douglas and Carless 2008; 33).

The rationalistic approach to the social nature of the coaching practice, outlined above, ignores the ambiguous nature of coaching and hence its complexity (Jones and Wallace 2005). The metaphor of 'orchestration' can be used to describe and depict the coaching process where decisions are constantly being made within the realms of the personal interaction of coach and athlete and this could result in a lack of clarity and therefore makes the pursuit less than straightforward (Wallace 2003). Coaching can be said to be intractable in nature where over-control may lead to 'squashing of talent', whereas a more laissez-faire approach may risk talent being dissipated unproductively (Jones and Wallace 2005). A coach's personality and social nature may affect their outlook and impact upon players. These difficulties should be acknowledged, reflected upon and dealt with; however, they must be addressed with the knowledge that they will probably always be there (Jones and Wallace 2005). However, Jones and Wallace (2005) say that the culture of coaching is not changing to take account of these factors and the coach is still considered to have control over everything. Coaches should therefore seek out solutions and approaches to manage the process as best as they can, the 'social vagaries' that the coaching context facilitates, should be managed by them and their personality and approach: "Coaches come to a personalise definition of their role that is shaped by their perception of what it means to be a coach together with the influence of occupational socialisation and subculture which provide a sense of what others expect of them" (Jones and Wallace 2005; 59). The need for the coach to practically coach the person in front of them in a technical way means that, "superficial practicality has been

brought at the expense of the deeper understanding that sociological and pedagogical approaches stand to offer, and which might inform the development of more realistic approaches to education" (Jones and Wallace 2005; 59). The nature of coaching as a social venture does inevitably mean that some elements of the coaching process will be unpredictable. Coaching cannot be a wholly managed concern – the inherent dilemmas that exist are endemic to the nature of coaching, but coaches could use encouragement, incentives, open-handedness, sincerity, understanding and sensitivity to draw the best from their athletes (Jones and Wallace 2005).

2.7 Chapter Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to review the latest literature detailing the relevant factors in the areas surrounding this study. The sociology of sport was examined and, in particular, the aspects affecting the socialisation of young people in sport. The bio-psycho-social approach was considered, along with other historic models of participant development including the DMSP. DMSP and other models will always be subject to scrutiny as they usually rely on retrospective analysis and self-reporting and therefore the robustness of these predictive models is questionable (Bridge and Toms 2013). With these sociological theories in mind, the journey of young people along, and through, development programmes and talent pathways was explored. Within sports coaching literature there has been a move towards researching and understanding how coaches and players interact and how important this can be, but "despite the recent increase of research into coaching, the essential social and cultural nature of the process has received little attention" (Jones et al 2002; 34). As far as golf is concerned, there is almost no research at all regarding coach/player interaction.

Factors affecting career trajectories were then addressed. Talent pathways, luck and incidents of personal significance were all found to be noteworthy, but perhaps just as important was personal reaction to the vagaries of these factors. Education programmes that have appeared in recent years, under the auspices of sporting 'academies', were then considered. In golf, these education programmes have largely been developed in response to the likelihood that most young people who set out to play professionally, will not succeed; qualifications almost being seen as an 'insurance policy'. However, the benefit and usefulness of these education programmes is called into question, being seen by many others as a distraction from sports performance.

The concept of communities of practice was then appraised. Communities of practice are formed by people who engage in a process of collective learning in a shared domain of human endeavour. Within communities of practice, legitimate peripheral participation refers both to the development of knowledgably skilled identities in practice as well as the transformation of communities of practice. These theories are the basis for understanding the group dynamics of the apprentice golfers as well as golf coaches and college staff within this research.

Coaching issues were then discussed. During the last few years there has been a process of the 'professionalisation' of coaching as part of a wider movement of the development of sport. In relation to golf coaching, there is plenty of available evidence reviewing technical content, the 'what' of coaching, within a golfing context, but not much addressing 'how' of coaching. This seems to be a historic factor in golf, where technical expertise and knowledge have been regarded as the most important factor for coaches for many years. However,

coaching impacts on the sporting experiences of young people to a great extent (Strachan et al 2009) and therefore coaches need to attend to the needs of the young person as a whole, as well as ensuring protection from burnout and injury.

This chapter set out to explore the existing research and knowledge in these areas in order not only to inform the direction and understanding of the data gathered during the study but also to underpin the methods that would be best employed to extract useful findings. The next chapter will focus specifically on the research method that was employed in this study.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Chapter Introduction

This chapter sets out to describe and explore the methodological approach and issues that were considered and addressed during the process of this research, and then to discuss the methods employed in the collection, analysis and presentation of data.

In terms of the content of this chapter, the first area to be considered is that of positioning myself as a researcher; the research was carried out from an interpretivist standpoint using qualitative methods in an attempt to draw in the reader and immerse them as fully as possible in the story and journey of the participants. The chapter then gives a detailed description of the research principles employed, followed by a section concerned with my work in the field that addresses issues such as reflexivity and social positioning. The tools of methodological enquiry employed here, namely observation, field notes and informal interviews, are then discussed. This is followed by an explanation of the grounded theory approach that was used for data analysis. The chapter also includes examples of the field notes that were collected during my time in the field. Finally there is a chapter conclusion.

3.2 Research Principles

3.2.1 Methodological paradigm

The paradigm adopted influences how research is undertaken; it encapsulates the researcher's epistemological, ontological and methodological premise (Denzin and Lincoln 2000a). Paradigm determines what questions are asked, what instruments are employed for data

collection and how findings and knowledge are subsequently generated. The sample cohort here, as with any research, had a significant impact on the choice of methods. In this particular case, participants engaged in a two-year period of study at a college and golf facility and the need to collect qualitative data over a prolonged period, suggested the research required an ethnographic approach.

This research was undertaken using an interpretative framework (Denzin 2000) so as to best decipher and interpret the factors affecting participants and their socialisation in golf. This approach was thought to be most appropriate as interpretation is the 'basis of all sociology' (Donnelly 2007). To achieve a sophisticated and reliable understanding of the social phenomenon being studied, a three year long period of field research was undertaken (covering the academic years 2009-2010 and 2010-2011) which included data collection using a variety of methods: participant observation, writing of field notes and interview to produce the 'rich description' described by Geertz (1993).

Interpretative sociology, using the tools of ethnography, thick description and reflexivity has become preeminent in the study of the sociology of sport (Cohen et al 2007; Donnelly 2007). This is perhaps due to the insight and understanding that it permits of participants as competent interpreters of the social world (James 2002) and allows researchers to participate and observe with "a wide-angle view of cultural behaviour" (Sands 2002; 63). Sparkes (2002; 26) takes this one stage further, stating, "The interpretative paradigm seeks explanation within the realm of individual consciousness and subjectivity, within the frame of reference of the participant as opposed to the observer of action". This research was undertaken using the approach outlined above as it was thought that this would allow participants to be viewed in a natural environment and as such it was hoped that this would lead to realistic and

authentic data and findings. Central to this argument and standpoint is the belief that social interaction and relations can be best understood from the point of view of those who are being studied (Cohen et al 2007). In adopting an interpretative, ethnographic approach, the researcher becomes "a maker of quilts or montages, interpretative *bricoleurs* who produce a … pieced together set of representations that are fitted to the specifics of a complex situation" (Denzin and Lincoln 2000a; 4).

This approach to interpretivist research seeks to understand the contextualised meaning of the participants' actions and interactions in context, personal constructs of personal realities (Denzin 1997; Greene 2000). These stories and constructs of individual realities are then pieced together by the researcher into a body of work that is accessible and available to the reader. This approach includes the 'hows' and 'whats' of social reality (Gubrium and Holstein 2000). In terms of epistemology, the existence of phenomena encountered during field work are viewed as constructed realities; their understanding a matter of subjective interpretation, open to the researchers own judgements and reflexive values (Ferguson 2006). In this regard, Denzin and Lincoln (2000b) observe "there seems to be an emerging consensus that all inquiry reflects the standpoint of the inquirer…we can no longer think of ourselves as neutral spectators of the social world" (Denzin and Lincoln 2000b; 872).

The search for authentic findings should involve a blend of personal experience and approach; this process could be regarded as "the most successful approach to the discovery of truth" (Cohen et al 2005; 5). The quality of the interpretation of data should be the prime concern rather than the purity of method (Hodkinson 2004), a point also made by O'Sullivan (2007; 247) who stated, "I am driven in my research by problems in the field: problems of

practice more so than problems of theory". In this way, I attempted to fit the methodology to the research, rather than fitting the research to the methodology.

3.2.2 Research questions

The approach in this piece follows the belief that "the design for collecting data, and the measurement and analysis of variables in the design should be selected in the light of the research question and should address it directly" (O'Sullivan 2007; 250). The research questions (listed in section 1.4), were concerned with sport and coaching, with particular emphasis on social construction and relationships within these areas. The narrative medium communicates in language that engages and draws the reader in; it offers an effective approach to data analysis and thereby enables the author to directly connect with their reader. Given my approach to the research as detailed above, as well as the likely readers of this research being coaches and coach educators, I felt a narrative form to be the most fitting choice of writing style to tell the story of what happened to the participants. The overarching question, regarding the journey of the participants through the programme, was written before field work began; the more specific areas identified for focus emerged during the field work. This process of formulating the sub-research questions was achieved by a frequent oscillation between field and desk: the research methods described here allowing for this flexibility. The movements backwards and forwards between field work, thinking, writing and further field work was, like ethnography as a whole, 'messy' and not a regulated pursuit. This approach was aimed at finding the best method to elicit the information that I required and is in line with the approach of Hodkinson (2004), who suggests that the emphasis should be directed towards the quality of the interpretation of the data rather than the objective purity of the method.

3.3 Ethnography

I felt it was appropriate to use a similar approach to previous research in this field whilst being open to paradigmatic and methodological development. Perhaps more importantly, the methods outlined here allowed me to access the personal element and the specifics of the apprentice golfers' journeys through golf and to explore the social phenomenon within this group. In recent times, the study of sport has often used ethnography as a methodology - the work of Robyn Jones and Andrew Sparkes being notable. Sport has become a barometer for social change and acts as a window into human behaviour and motivations; in this way the unique anthropological perspective can yield a "rich and textured look at human behaviour" (Sands 2002; 8). Using observation, interviews, as well as informal conversations over a prolonged period enabled a detailed multi-layered picture to be constructed and patterns of behaviour to be explored. My own previous research for undergraduate and Masters dissertations also used this type of method and so I was familiar with it, but ultimately I felt that this approach would simply be the most productive given the area of study.

3.3.1 Anthropology and Ethnography: History and context

Ethnography is a widely used methodology within the social sciences and came directly from the anthropological tradition. Early anthropologists sought to build complex theories of culture and typically used travelogues and storied passages. These were often first-hand accounts of cultures that were being discovered for the first time. Malinowski is regarded by many as the quintessential ethnographer of modern times and has been described as the pioneer of ethnographic methods and participant observation. He was one of the first to believe that the scientific study of human behaviour could take place in naturalistic settings,

far away from laboratories, this being in stark contrast to the embedded empiricism of the time. The approach I wanted to take within this research was to study the apprentice golfers within the AASE programme, examining their behaviour in a naturalistic setting and reporting my findings in a way that could immerse and engage the reader in order to feel the experience as if they were there themselves.

Clifford Geertz (1993), in his work on Balinese cockfights, was one of the first to suggest that the ethnographer negotiated with participants and, as this was the case, the ethnographer was part of the process; a phenomenon modern ethnographers refer to as reflexivity. In so doing, Geertz acknowledged the difficult ethnographic aim of becoming an insider whilst simultaneously maintaining an analytical distance from the research setting. The concept of reflexivity will be considered in more detail later in this chapter but it is a critical element of the ethnographic approach that researchers need to attend to and consider.

3.3.2 Ethnography and Sport

Ethnography is a methodological approach that is increasingly used and valued within social research into sport (Gratton and Jones 2010), but whilst several authors discuss the practicalities of utilising this approach there is little published that specifically focuses on the field of sport ethnography (with a few exceptions, notably Jones, 2006b; Tsang, 2000; Sands, 2002 and MacPhail et al 2003 and 2006). Sands undertook many ethnographies relating to sport, including those examining sprinting and surf culture. He describes what he did in simple terms; “I interviewed players, observed behaviour, took field notes, spent time writing up those field notes, and thought a lot about what my participation would contribute to the ethnography” (Sands 2002; xi). This may sound similar to any ethnographic study but, as

Sands points out, the element of sport brings with it slightly different contexts and nuances - athletes have a cultural identity thrust upon them by the sport in terms of, for example, dress, language and even work ethic and these factors must be taken account of by researchers. This aspect is one that is replicated in golf, where golf dress, language and culture are unique. My own socialisation as a golfer was helpful in this regard and allowed me to understand and interpret behaviour readily (this area will be discussed in more detail in section 3.4).

Both Douglas and Carless (2008) and Lapp and Carr (2008) identify the particular benefits of using narrative specifically within coaching and coach education. They believe that storied representations of research can be used as an effective pedagogical tool which stimulates reflective practice and increases a coach's understanding of person-centred approaches to coach/athlete relations and in so doing makes research more accessible to practitioners.

3.3.3 Ethnography and the narrative form

Ethnography collects the 'messiness' of reality and attempts to make sense of it. It is the study of people and culture and its representation seeks to explain these behaviours and cultures (Geertz 1993). The narrative form can then be used to re-tell the story of the participants in a way that the reader will be familiar with and understand because "Stories and storytelling are central to our lives and learning" (Armour and Chen 2012; 237). Ethnographic writing acknowledges what is, and sometimes what might have been, and is thus a flexible means of conveying feelings and emotions (Van Maanen 2011). It offers a powerful and evocative way to analyse data and communicate with the reader. To produce ethnography it could be argued that data and evidence are not analysed so much as retold in a narrative form, allowing the stories of the participants to be heard. However, this does not take account of the thought processes of the researcher who must assimilate their own

experiences, adding or taking away with the aim of highlighting their own understanding and communicating these to the reader. Jones (2006b; 1018), a notable modern sports sociologist, said he was tired of reading sanitised and constrained pieces that were hemmed in by structural convention and so sought to "write a more meaningful, evocative coaching story", one which was more faithful to the everyday realities of a coaching context, and therefore he chose ethnographic methods to achieve this.

I wanted to use a narrative style in producing this research as I hoped this would draw in and engage the reader. As well as these stylistic preferences, a narrative form could be beneficial in social analysis because "[it] can be argued to offer more in the way of enlightenment than putative theory" (Ellis and Bochner 2000; 778). As Ellis and Bochner describe, "I turned to narrative as a mode of inquiry because I was persuaded that social science texts needed to construct a different relationship between researchers and subjects and between authors and readers. I wanted a more personal, collaborative, and interactive relationship, one that centred on the question of how human experience is endowed with meaning" (Ellis and Bochner 2000; 743-744). Social settings, including educational ones, are built on "feelings, emotions, images, visions, thoughts, beliefs, ideas, understandings, intellectual and practical enterprises, languages, relationships, and rituals" (Ellis and Bochner 2000; 739). In other words, interpretations are built on what it is to be human and my contention here is that this is most effectively understood when relayed as a narrative. Narratives allow us to understand, they engage the feelings and emotions that describe and depict social practices. Taking this a stage further, ethnographic methods can allow cultural understanding and interpretation to emerge quickly as the reader is submerged in the experience (Chang 2008).

3.3.4 Ethnography within this study

An ethnographic approach for this study seemed appropriate given the areas of interest. The advantage of this approach is the ability to see and then convey the understanding of beliefs, motivations, and behaviours of participants that can be gained at first hand and, in so doing, "place specific encounters, events and understandings into a fuller, more meaningful context" (Tedlock 2000; 455). Entering into everyday interactions with participants in their 'naturalistic setting' (Gratton and Jones 2010) therefore allowed a better and closer view of participants than could be gained from many other methods of enquiry (Tedlock 2000).

Heyl (2002) believes that ethnographic methods can be interpreted in different ways, but that there are areas that can be agreed upon: listening well and respectfully, acquiring a self-awareness of the role in the co-construction of meaning during the process and being cognizant of ways in which both the on-going relationship and the broader social context affect the participants. My approach was thus, listening to what was happening around me, being aware of my presence in the research setting and noting and allowing for this throughout.

Participant observation can be described as being a fundamental building block of qualitative research, and therefore a "mainstay of the ethnographic enterprise" (Angrosino and Mays de Pérez, 2000; 673). It allows data to be gathered from the physical, human and interactional settings (Cohen et al 2007) in an unobtrusive way and contributes to 'thick description'. I gathered stories and narratives from data collected via my direct involvement in the group as well as participant observation. This data was gathered and recorded by means of

ethnographic field notes (see later section 3.5.1) whose production "lie at the very core of constructing ethnographic texts" (Emerson et al 2002; viii). However, the field notes produced do not constitute the findings, rather, the researcher "fashion[s] these accounts into a prose piece; we transform biographical interviews and field notes into sociological text" (Richardson 1990; 116).

Ethnography demands an insider's view. The shared cultural meanings of the behaviours, actions, events, and contexts of a group of people are central to understanding. The need to observe and study the group from within its natural setting and to take part in what goes on there (Robson 2002) is therefore critical to achieve this. In this regard, I took part in discussions of techniques and swing problems when the coaches invited me to do so and, in so doing, was part of the group. However, the ethnographer must maintain an attitude of detachment towards the society or culture studied. This is a difficult feat for the researcher who needs to become an insider whilst "simultaneously maintaining an analytical distance to process cultural information" (Sands 2002; 15).

This approach and the ethnographic account detailed here enabled the data to be "pieced together by the reader allowing the full story to be told" (Denzin and Lincoln 2000a; 4). This multi-source approach was a method I wished to employ, not only to triangulate results, but also to give a rich and varied description of the experiences of the participants.

3.3.5 Validity and Reliability

The issues and arguments that surround validity and reliability have been transformed over the last hundred years or so, but it remains the case that "Without validity (authority) there can be no truth, and without truth there can be no trust in a text's claims to validity (legitimation)" (Denzin 1997; 6). The Positivist sensibilities of the first half of the twentieth century, although still much in evidence, have been added to by modernist approaches, a crisis of representation, right through to the 'seventh moment' that "asks that social sciences and the humanities become sites for critical conversations" (Denzin and Lincoln 2000a; 3). Since the narrative turn, ethnography and storytelling have become more recognised in social science, this approach is one that was followed in this research. The great benefit of mirroring the research methodology of other studies within sport was that it allows these pieces of research to be viewed as a collective with all the related advantages that this comparison affords. It is thought that these benefits would outweigh the potential paradigmatic polarisation that Hammersley and Atkinson (2002) highlight. However, within qualitative research, complete reliability is challenging as each research setting, and social situation therein, is different. In an attempt to mitigate this, trustworthiness and authenticity could be used as factors against which reliability is assessed (Lincoln and Guba 2000). With this in mind my cultural closeness to golf was both an advantage and disadvantage; I could fit in well with the setting and knew the language of golf but, at the same time, I needed to guard against superimposing my existing knowledge and attitudes. The discipline of writing field notes literally, honestly and fully, helped me to overcome some of these issues.

The greatest challenges facing ethnographers are those of validity and reliability. How can narratives be compared to more positivist approaches? Indeed, stories and narratives may reflect and advance a romantic construction of the self and this may make them unworthy of social science; narrative storytelling may be therapeutic, the text acting as an agent of self-discovery which Atkinson (1997) claims can therefore not be academic. However, we live within the tensions constituted by our memories of the past and anticipations of the future (Silverman 2000). The question is not whether the story accurately reflects the past, but rather what are the consequences that the story conveys. Surely the critical questions should be: what can narratives do, what consequences can they have and to what good use can they be put? Narrative is sometimes undervalued; academic value is often misplaced on what is "smart, clever and analytical" (Ellis and Bochner, 2000; 746). In terms of validity, this should be judged by whether the narrative is believable and possible (Ellis 2004). The validity of this approach is at the heart of Gadamer's hermeneutics, in the studies of human sciences "the only scientific thing is to recognise what is" (Gadamer 1975; 466). To recognise 'what is' in the context of the golf academy and to convey this as precisely and proficiently as I could, was my aim. To produce ethnography, the thought processes of the researcher are key: they must assimilate and process their own experiences, adding or taking away with the aim of highlighting their experience and evoking it for the reader. If then as a researcher I approach these issues from a position of outcome rather than process, the issues of validity and reliability are complex and it may be said "there is no such thing as orthodox reliability in ethnographic research" (Ellis and Bochner 2000; 751).

3.4 Working in the field

3.4.1 Reflexivity

Within an interpretative, narrative context, reflexivity is an innovation in methodology that has replaced the traditional effort to discover and recode truth by examining how the ethnographers own experiences, background and culture affect their findings (Gergen and Gergen 2000). In acknowledging the social construction that takes place as a direct result of participant observation and interaction, Hodkinson (2004) identifies that the researcher is always implicated in the research because of their social position and identity - the researcher is effectively one of the actors and thus plays his or her part. Once this has been acknowledged, the key action of the researcher is to ensure that his values and positioning are clearly articulated (Greenback 2003). As such, an ethnographic approach been seen to acknowledge and nurture methodological self-consciousness (Pollner and Emerson 2002), attempting to "turn the anthropological lens back upon the self" (Karp and Kendall 1982; 260). This is the approach that was adopted during this research. The text of ethnography should therefore be shaped by one's engagement with, and participation in, the social contexts being reviewed (Schwandt 2000); researchers "are obligated to be reflexive about what they see and how they see it" (Charmaz and Mitchell 2002; 162).

In order to make engagement in the field as natural and realistic as possible, one approach would be to become "culturally invisible by becoming culturally similar" (Sands 2002; 22). In this research, I believe that my familiarity with golf culture was an advantage and something that I drew on and used, as Denzin and Lincoln (2000a) suggest, especially when I was at Bridge Golf Club where the vast majority of my time in the field was spent. However, the danger is that I made assumptions and/or that my identity was built and assumed to be

one thing or another given that I am from a golfing culture. Balancing the positive and negative, I felt that the advantages of my initial acceptance into the group as a 'golfer' far outweighed the disadvantages. For instance, to be accepted into the settings of the research I needed to be able to speak golf 'language'; being a socialised golfer and familiar with golfing culture aided this process. My status as a PGA Professional golfer was also a particular advantage when interacting with the golf coaches. However, during the research process, and due to my positioning, there was a danger of over-familiarity, and 'going native' (Jorgensen 1989), the risk of becoming too involved with individuals rather than remaining detached and self-interrogative (Lincoln and Guba 2000). However, with an open and questioning mind, this should in theory permit one to observe the behaviour of self and others, to interpret social processes and to understand and explain practice and, in so doing, enable one to gain a better understanding of the beliefs, motivations, and behaviours of participants. I therefore tried to understand and adopt a reflexive approach and in so doing followed the advice of Vidich and Lyman (2000; 38) who assert that the researcher should be "committed to an understanding of the self" throughout the research process.

3.4.2 Research access

Through the course leader at Mid-Town College, Alex, I was able to secure access to the golfers, college staff and coaches (all of the participants here have been allocated a pseudonym). During the research, I spent much of my time at Bridge Golf Club rather than at Mid-Town College as the golf coaching element of the course was my main focus. The apprentice golfers spent one day a week at Bridge and the rest of the week at Mid-Town College. This study does have some similarities with the work of Parker (1995, 2000a, 2000b, and 2006) as both have young people involved in sporting apprenticeships at their core.

However, my focus was much more directed at the sport element, coaching and coaching practices, unlike Parker, who was more concerned with the educational elements. Initial contact with Alex was by email and this was followed up by a face-to-face meeting. I explained what I wanted to do and Alex was very happy to help; he seemed to be motivated by the thought that the study would be able to highlight any areas where the programme could be improved. I did not want to commit too formally to this, aside from assuring him that he would be able to have access to a copy of the final research thesis. From time to time, Alex did ask me various questions that were generally about the coaching programme and how and where the apprentice golfers could get access to PGA training. My attitude to these questions was to ask questions back, to involve the coaches in the conversation or to furnish him with information about the PGA that was freely available to all through various resources and websites. Over the course of the study I built a good working relationship with Alex and without his agreement I would have not been able to get access to the apprentice golfers and the study would not have been possible. Below is a field note from one of my first visits to the college:

Field note – 12th November 2009

I feel pretty out of place today, I'm at the college and everyone seems so young, I must stick out like a sore thumb. I go towards the staff room where I have agreed to meet Alex, but stand outside because I'm a little early. Eventually he appears and we shake hands and have a chat. We then make our way to the classroom - it's a supervised private study session today that I'm here for. Once in the classroom, I feel even older as the guys are larking around and seem to be communicating in a language I don't understand. It feels like I'm going to have a big job getting any

useful information from the students. However, it's early in the study and the main thing is my presence and getting the participants used to me being around.

In discussion with Alex, I assured him that the anonymity of the apprentice golfers, parents, coaches and venue would be maintained and confidentiality assured, as suggested by Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias (1996) and Wright and O'Flynn (2012). The way in which this was addressed is further discussed in section 3.4.6 entitled 'Ethics'. Once I had gained access through the college and the course leader I needed to communicate with the two golf coaches in order to gain access to the coaching sessions. Billy was one of the two PGA Professional golf coaches who worked with the apprentice golfers. I had known Billy before I started this study as a fellow PGA Professional and coach, and perhaps this made it easier for me to gain access. Nigel, the second coach, was also very positive and amenable to my involvement. Although I did not know Nigel personally, I knew of him and he was probably aware of my position with the PGA. Throughout the process these two coaches seemed to be very open and honest; they asked nothing of me and seemed to have an innate sense that I would not do anything untoward, perhaps this was because I too was a PGA Professional and there was an in-built trust. What I have tried to do is to describe and depict all three of these individuals as honestly, and straightforwardly as possible – see section 6.2 for more information regarding the coaches.

Through the initial contact with Alex and then Billy and Nigel, I was able to negotiate access to the coaching sessions in which the students took part. In fact, as the study progressed, I was able to gain almost unlimited access. For example, towards the end of the study I met with Alex to ask him about what each of the apprentice golfers was going to do following the end of the course, unprompted, Alex telephoned a few of them on the spot and asked them. I

am sure he needed this information for his own purposes, but this was very useful in me being able to access significant amounts of information quickly. Throughout the field work, the gatekeepers always agreed to my requests and, as such, I was able to interview students, attend educational sessions at the college as well as the coaching days which were my prime focus. Alex seemed to be quite excited that someone was taking an interest in 'his' programme and the way he ran it; it seemed very personal to him. Rather than him running the programme on behalf of the college, he definitely felt some personal ownership of it. At the time I negotiated access, I suspected that Alex may have wanted to use my involvement for his own purposes, for instance, that a PGA 'seal of approval' had been granted, but this did not materialise. Alex's only request involved me sending him some comments regarding the coaching at the end of the 2009-2010 academic year. Alex's attitude and outlook not only made access to the sample possible, but after the initial negotiation, I did not have to revisit the issue with him. This open and full access that Alex allowed and afforded me, did feel like the privilege that Powell and Lovelock (2002) describe. The fullness of this access allowed me to not only access the sample, but to maximise the potential data and thus findings.

Whilst the course leader and coaches knew who I was and what I was doing, as far as the apprentice golfers were concerned I am sure they were less and less clear as time went by. Billy did introduce me to the group twice at the start of the field work, but was fairly vague about what I was doing. I did not ask him to say, or not say, anything in particular. Billy's description of me that I was "from the PGA and just seeing what was going on" was suitably ambiguous; many people within the golf industry are confused about the role of the PGA so I am sure the apprentice golfers were fairly unclear too. All of the golfers (and some parents) had been asked to sign a consent form (Appendix 3) in order to participate in the study so they could probably have worked out that something more involved than Billy's description

was taking place. However, as the study progressed I hoped, and indeed felt, that I was fading away into the background; my presence being taken for granted and my role forgotten allowing me to observe behaviour relatively unobtrusively as Fontana and Frey (2000) describe.

3.4.3 Bridge Golf Club

For the most part my interaction with the students and coaches was undertaken at Bridge Golf Club. The club was based a few miles from the college and had twenty-seven golf holes, an academy made up of twenty floodlit golf bays, a short game practice area, putting green and practice bunker. The club was proprietary-owned, being a stand-alone business run for profit. It had a friendly outlook and feel and has active ladies and seniors sections. It must be noted at this point that "settings are not naturally occurring phenomena; they are constituted and maintained through cultural definition and social strategies" (Hammersley and Atkinson 2002; 41). Bridge golf club, its customers and social constructs are not only unique, but were already in place before the study began, and as such, this must be acknowledged.

My first visit to the Bridge is detailed in the field note below. I had decided to go and look at the Club before the programme began so I knew my way around.

> Field note - Monday 20th April 2009
>
> *It's my first visit to the golf club where the coaching takes place today. Although the guys I am going to be studying haven't even been selected I want to go and have a look at the set up and get a feel for it. My first impressions…well, it's very warm, a*

lovely day in fact and quite an attractive club. I drive towards the car park taking it all in. It looks like quite a modern course/club, probably built in the 1990s.

I park and do a quick car park check, a habitual hangover from a previous study: Mondeo (3), Corolla, Fiesta, Corsa, Micra, White van (2), Astra, Golf, Focus, Toyota 4x4, Accord, Jag estate, Zafira, Passat.

This seems to fit with the overall feel of the place; not the most affluent golf club. I sit in the car and wait to meet Alex but I'm a bit early so I wind the windows down to get some air. There is a steady stream of golfers coming off the courses and onto the car park. The golfers look, almost without exception, aged between their 50s and mid 60s. They have been playing a stableford competition (a points based competition based on golf handicap) and it's taken more than 5 hours! One says to another "I thought I could live with him today, but he's just got too many shots on me…he scored 37 and I just can't live with that".

I'm still early so decide to have a walk around. I go into the clubhouse first of all. In the bar there a group having some lunch, average age…70ish. Nobody else is in the bar so I decide to have a look at the driving range. There are around 20 bays and it is quite a pleasant range. However, I spot and unexpected group hitting balls; three young men hitting boys and two young women watching. They look in their early 20s. The men have no shirts on, shaved heads and tattoos; not the normal golfing population that's for sure.

The golf club then, was not typical of most clubs. It was more relaxed, cheaper and did not adhere to the strict dress code that many members' clubs enforce. It also passed the 'shoes in the car-park' test; many 'posh' golf clubs insist that you are not allowed to change your shoes in the car and must visit the 'gentlemen's', or 'ladies', locker rooms.

3.4.4 Social Positioning

I arranged to attend the Trials Day that was part of the college's selection process. This turned out to be a great opportunity as I was able to interact with parents and potential students, as well as the two coaches. I hoped that being 'around' even before the course actually started would mean that participants would be used to, and think nothing of, my presence once the course began. I was also able to collect some primary data at the same time. The collection of such data can help to begin to formulate the research problem (Hammersley and Atkinson 2002). It was interesting to see how their initial behaviour changed as the participants gained confidence and became acquainted with one another; the trial was just that for many of the apprentice golfers, some of them were physically shaking when being put through their paces by the coaches.

> Field note – 14th August 2009 Trials Day
>
> *I arrive at Bridge and there are apprentice golfers all over the place, quite a contrast to last time when the average age of golfers was around 60. The apprentice golfers all look very nervous as I sit and have a chat to Alex, Billy and Nigel. Alex, very organised as usual, explains what will happen - the first 5 players will go to the range*

with the coaches and have their playing 'test' followed by a short game challenge and then an interview.

The first five are on their way. I make my way to the range with Billy and Nigel and we chat.

I 'hang around' and manage to talk to some parents. We talk about the course and the mix of education and golf; it seems that their questions revolve around the educational elements and they typically report that their son/daughter are really keen to try to make it as a player. I don't really have much interaction with the young people, it's probably enough for me that they have seen me here and that they might begin to think of me as 'part of the furniture'.

Once the study began, it took a few weeks for both the coaches and apprentice golfers to fully become accustomed to my presence, after initially looking slightly confused when they saw me, they gradually began to look straight through me and their behaviour (and often misbehaviour), seemed to demonstrate that their guard was down. On a typical coaching day, I would arrive early and wait in the bar area, or chat to the coaches. I would then position myself in the two teaching bays where the individual lessons were taking place. Lunchtime was always an interesting time of the day. The whole group would troop inside the clubhouse for lunch.

Field note - March 2010

We walk into the clubhouse at the end of the morning session. The apprentice golfers as usual at one end of the room and the coaches, and me, at the farthest table away on the other side of the room. Over lunch the coaches would be joined by an academic 'helper' – 'Ned'. We would then set about righting the world's wrongs; the latest in the Tiger Woods scandal or just talking about the apprentice golfers and their behaviour and misbehaviour.

When Ellis and Bochner (2000; 752) discuss their use of emotional recall, in which they imagine being back in the scene both emotionally and physically, they describe that "thoughts and feelings circle around us, flash back and then forward, thoughts and feelings merge, drop from our grasp then reappear in another context... If you can revisit the scene emotionally, then you remember other details". That is the very essence of what I was trying to achieve with this study. I *was* there. I *was* involved. I was a part of the group, yet I was also positioned outside of the two main groups in the study (coaches and players) and therefore in a kind of 'no man's land'. However, I had to work hard to try to maintain this neutrality; occasionally one of the coaches would ask me to 'take a look' at one of the golfers swings. I would try not to say too much, often mumbling something uncontroversial. I think the coaches found this strange to begin with, but as the study wore on, they asked me less and used my presence to tell me what they were doing and in so doing potentially legitimise their coaching in a similar way to that described by Toms and Kirk (2006). Perhaps because the coaches had become used to me not offering an opinion, they began to accept my unwillingness to engage, so they seemed to realise that whatever they said, I was not going to contradict them or be the 'coaching police'. I think this worked in my favour as I acquired a

clear picture of their coaching practice because they neither checked with me nor sought my approval.

As time went by, my bond with certain participants became stronger and they trusted me more; they opened up and provided me with insights that were not possible in the first few months of field work. Perhaps the skill lies in achieving emotional closeness alongside an ability to move around within the experience; the 'no man's land' of being in neither camp was important so as to establish some kind of trust from the participants. If I had appeared too friendly with the coaches then I would have immediately become one of them and perhaps the participants would have felt less trusting of me. This was an issue in the first couple of months of my involvement as the only individuals I knew were the coaches and they introduced me to the group; as such I was probably seen as an establishment figure. This fear was confirmed by Billy who said, on more than one occasion: "This is Jon from the PGA coming to see what the programme is all about, and you never know he might be able to get you an invite to play in some events!". This type of statement was only used in the first few weeks of research and after a while I was probably seen more as a coaching observer. I made a point not to wear any uniform that might say PGA on it; I did however, make sure I was in golf kit and therefore as culturally inconspicuous as possible.

Perhaps my intended independent or 'I'm *not* one of the coaches' self-positioning only really became fully apparent when I talked to the individual players one-to-one. I would ask them about the coaches and tried to emphasise the fact that I did not want a 'sugar-coated' view; I wanted their honest and frank opinions. In pursuit of this I suggested that the results of the study might be used to try to make the entire national programme better; the more open participants could be the more effective and better we could make the course for future

students. The relationships I built up with Wes, Dexter and Guy through meeting them away from the group and at course venues, changed their attitude towards me when we were back in the group dynamic; they were more chatty and happy to talk and pass the time of day, other participants were still a little less forthcoming.

When in the field, the oxymoron participant observation is a very difficult issue with which to grapple. I needed to be seen as a passive observer, and to some degree, as a member of the group. This was made easier by my knowledge of golfing culture; dress, language and common behaviour. However, despite clearly being a socialised golfer, I also wanted to retain a neutral status; not really giving any impression as to my views and not projecting any opinions onto the participants whose unadulterated views and feelings I wanted to tap into. This issue will be discussed in greater depth in the next section.

I tried to do all that I could to avoid the possibility of misconceptions of my social position in the field, as Toms and Kirk (2006) describe, and was very aware of the multiple positions into which the participants may have tried to place me. Trying to remain neutral was difficult and may have worked to a greater or lesser degree. The idea of researchers only leaving 'footprints' is unrealistic and a much better aim is to avoid causing harm instead (Toms and Kirk 2006). In response to Sparkes' (2002) suggestion that the researcher be concerned with 'evocation' as opposed to 'true' representation, I used systematic sociological introspection, a standpoint also taken by Jones (2006b) and Purdy et al (2008), to understand and frame my experiences and produce my own narrative.

3.4.5 Participant Observation

So, given the acknowledged social position I assumed as described above, I was a participant during field work. I was also researching and observing whilst there. However, to simply attach the label of 'participant observation' to this pursuit does not convey in sufficient detail what precise form this took. There are various classifications of roles that researchers may play within sociological field work. These may all be described as 'participant observation' and are on a continuum from 'complete observer' at one end to 'complete participant' at the other. Between these extremes are 'participant as observer' and 'observer as participant' (Gold 1969). During this field work I was not a natural participant of the group being studied and would not have been there unless undertaking this research; as such I would classify my role as 'observer as participant'. As with all of these role types, there are certain advantages and disadvantages. As an 'observer participant' Gold (1969) would suggest that I was more able to have a detached view and be less likely to 'go native', but at the same time this detachment may mean that it is more likely for the researcher to be misunderstood and there may some issues around role clarity. My time in the field during this work to some degree negated the issue of detachment, as after a while my presence did not seem unusual or uncommon.

The observation undertaken in the research setting allowed me to frame the perspective of the study, something that is important so that the actions of the participants can be adequately interpreted and explained within that frame of reference (Allan 2002). Observation in this respect can also serve as a powerful agent of validation, although as Angrosino and Mays de Pérez (2000) point out, naturalistic observation should be the goal in order to interfere with

the research setting as little as possible. Having said that, "We cannot be sure that a case, telling its own story, will tell all or tell well", (Stake 2000; 441) so a process of triangulation of methods may be useful. This process of triangulation may use observation as "the most powerful source of validation" (Alder and Alder 1994; 389) and leads the researcher though a process of analysis; observation leads to thought, then to conversations, which leads to semi-structured interviews and follow up questions to deepen and further understanding.

The importance of participant observation is especially relevant in research which seeks to generate theoretical interpretation (Jorgensen 1989) and this approach fits well with the method of data analysis employed in this study, namely grounded theory (Cohen et al 2007). Jorgensen (1989; 14) states that, "ultimately, the methodology of participant observation aims to generate practical examples and theoretical truths about human life, grounded in the realities of daily existence". To aid this process it may be desirable for the observer to perform multiple roles within the research setting in order to gain "a degree of rapport, even intimacy, with people, situations, and the settings of research" (Jorgensen 1989; 21), and it allows collection of context specific live data that is 'fresh' (Cohen et al 2007).

The character of field relations heavily influences a researcher's ability to collect accurate and truthful information (Jorgensen 1989). As such, the success of participant observation fundamentally relies on the ability of the researcher to interact with, as well as adjust and adapt to, the participants as well as the research setting. Experienced researchers are able to discover and adopt roles that can "maximise their take of information by selecting a field role…which is simply an expedient device for securing a given level of information" (Gold 1969; 38). However, this may be easier said than done as Sands (2002; xvii) remarks in his

study of surf culture: the hardest part of the process was, “learning to walk through a foreign culture, just as a baby learns to take the few steps. In taking the baby steps, the field worker travels through a series of developmental stages, or doors, learning more and more about the world around him”. Sands describes how the field worker becomes more able to ‘ferret out’ information as time goes on and open more and more doors.

In this case, my cultural compatibility in the golf context (my golfing experience and background, I wear the golf ‘uniform’ and can converse in golf speak being a golfer and PGA Golf Professional myself) aided my integration and level of acceptance. Some of these doors were already open or at least ajar. I knew one of the coaches quite well and this definitely helped in achieving the coaches’ agreement to allow me to undertake the study. However, participation can be a “daunting task that involves a time-consuming effort to establish rapport with a new ‘community’” (Sands 2002; 22). The researcher must also learn to act in the community so that they are eventually accepted as part of the social landscape (Sands 2002). Building empathy with the apprentice golfers was more difficult than with the coaches, with whom I had a lot in common. The field note below details my first conversation with Julie that only took place a few weeks before the end of my time in the field. I was so well established in the group that I managed to extract interesting data from her; one such fact was that, even though she was on a course designed for participants to achieve “sporting excellence”, according to her she started “too late”:

Field note - March 2011

I talk to Julie for the first time just a few weeks from the end of the course. She played hockey to a high standard (regionally) before she really started golf, then played both sports for a while and then gave up hockey as she was getting injured and it was affecting her golf. However, she says that she started golf "too late" to be any good.

"I want to be a (golf) coach" she tells me. Julie works at the xxxx Golf Club and applied for a 'golf' job there but was turned down, she re-applied and got a job in the bar and now works in the sales office at the weekend. She has never really seen playing as something she really wants to do and now wants to get a job, get settled and start her career.

'Participant observation' involves emotional involvement and to ensure this is this does not unduly influence data, a mindset of objective detachment should adopted (Cohen et al 2007). This professional detachment and self interrogation should, according to Lincoln and Guba (2000), permit the researcher to observe the conduct of self and others, to interpret social processes and to understand why both participants and social processes are the way they are. In this fashion the researcher acts as a 'human instrument'. This sounds quite clinical and may not be easily achieved. Researchers may choose unrepresentative individuals on which to focus and they may become too attached to the group or participants to see them dispassionately (Cohen et al 2007). I tried to minimise these risks by ensuring that I was in the field long enough to know something of all the participants, choosing to focus in on a few of them in the latter stages.

In order to motivate the informant, they must feel that the experience is enjoyable, satisfying and worthwhile; any perceived barriers must be overcome (Frankfort-Nachimas and Nachimas 1996). My time in the field was an advantage here, being able to build rapport with the participants over a prolonged period. However, this opens a researcher up to the potential danger of 'over-rapport' (Hammersley and Atkinson 2002). With respect to this I tried not to focus on favourites (even though I knew some of the participants much better than others), or to become irritated by misbehaviour. 'Stuart' was a case in point here; problems were created by his misbehaviour such as hitting golf balls down the walkway at the back of the golf range. On the face of it I was surprised by such ill-mannered behaviour, but I reminded myself that these participants were only 16 or 17 years old.

Given all of this information, it must be stated that participant observation is also an intensely time-consuming method of data collection. However, participant observation can be undertaken on a number of levels taking the form of complete participation or merely the shadowing of cultural members (Sands 2002). In the case of my research, the participant observation probably tended to be more towards the shadowing and away from complete participation as I was not there for every session that the students attended. However, I was present for the majority of the sessions they had with the golf coaches, and was 'that bloke' from the PGA. This must have had some kind of effect on the perceptions of the students, but trying to quantify this is impossible, so all I can do is highlight it and take it into account. After the first few weeks of the study I simply attended sessions, keeping a low profile, whilst at the same time, listening intently and sometimes making notes.

3.4.6 Ethics

This research was conducted within the ethical guidelines suggested by the British Educational Research Association (BERA 2011) and as required by the University of Birmingham. The first stage of any ethical considerations is to decide whether the research should take place at all. Cohen et al (2007) suggest that a cost/benefit analysis is a good way of evaluating this issue. This method allows for comparison of various options of approaching an issue or project. A different approach may be a consequential analysis (Murphy and Dingwall 2002) which focuses on the outcomes of the research - have participants been harmed in any way, and, if they have, has this been outweighed by the research benefits? Given that the research was going to be carried out in an informal and anonymous environment and that the young people involved would be able to decline participation, I deemed that the benefits of furthering understanding in this area would outweigh any possible costs and consequences. However, I wanted to go further than this and ensure that participants' rights regarding issues such as privacy, respect, and self-determination were not harmed. As BERA (2011; 5) suggest "(individuals) should be treated fairly, sensitively, with dignity, and within an ethic of respect and freedom from prejudice regardless of age, gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, class, nationality, cultural identity, partnership status, faith, disability, political belief or any significant difference". To this end, a comprehensive consent form was produced (Appendix 3), which conformed to BERA's (2011) definition of 'informed consent' and was signed by all those who participated in the study. The form made it clear that at any time, and without reason, individuals could withdraw their consent and that this would mean exclusion from the study. None of the participants chose to withdraw.

The names of the participants were changed during the writing up process so as to protect their identities (BERA 2011 and Wright and O'Flynn 2012). As Rees (2002) suggests, pseudonyms were assigned to reflect ethnic origin, age and background. The geographical setting of the research venue was also deliberately hidden to further protect the identities of the participants. The apprentice golfers' ages and keywords - listed later in the piece - were included as I felt they were vital in order to convey an authentic feel of the research but were protected by the above precautions.

As well as these formal ethical issues, different, less formal, possibly moral, issues did surface. As previously mentioned, coaches did ask me to 'take a look' at golfer(s) in the first few months in the field. My response was to try to say little and just ask questions. Because of this approach and my failure to start coaching, requests like these reduced to zero over time. However, issues that arose out of conversations, like the chat with 'Lisa', detailed in the field note below, did present me with ethical dilemmas:

> Field note - February 2011
>
> *I sit watching a lesson going on, and sit next to Lisa. We begin to chat and she tells me that yesterday she found out she did not get a place on the Applied Golf Management (AGMS) course (University of Birmingham and PGA-run programme) and appears to be quite gutted. She dropped out of doing 'A' levels after the first year and up to that point was not academic and did not work hard. But since starting the AASE program she has been getting double distinctions and is quite upset that this has not been enough to get her into AGMS. However, she looked on the PGA website*

and is going to apply for a job as a tournament controller – she asks me if her age will count against her – I say something about Human Resources policies....

Lisa also has the option of going to America where she has been offered a scholarship at University to play golf – she says she will keep this option open even though she does not really see herself as a player. I'm thinking "go to the States on the scholarship, you'll have the time of your life even if you don't like golf that much!", but say nothing.

By the time I had weighed the ethical, moral and practical implications of what to say, the moment is past and I have just muttered something that's not very useful...and that doesn't really feel very good.

Should I have advised Lisa on her career path and PGA training, or should I have said nothing and let her find her own way? What would have happened if I was not there? But I was there and I could have helped, but did not. This did not feel entirely satisfactory to me but "all that is required of ethnographers is that they take due note of the ethical aspects of their work and make the best judgements they can in the circumstances" (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995; 286).

3.5 Data Collection

3.5.1 Field notes

The process of writing field notes has been identified as the very essence of the ethnographer's craft (Emerson et al 2002). In order to produce the polished accounts of events the writer must turn their lived experience into pieces of written text. My use of the term 'field note' in this instance encompasses a mixture of events and quotes from

participants as well as my approach and thought processes. However, in the field, ethnographers often feel uneasy about field notes and that many regard them as "as kind of backstage scribbling – a little bit dirty, a little bit suspect, not something to talk about too openly and specifically" (Emerson et al (1995; ix). It is perhaps for this reason that field notes remain largely hidden and mysterious never seeing the 'light of day' (Atkinson 1997). As a result often very little attention is given to how these notes are actually recorded and written. However, the taking and recording of these notes must be approached by the ethnographer with precision and organisation, the systematic recording of data being a key element of methodology (Jorgensen 1989). The writing of field notes is something that needs to be worked on (Hammersley and Atkinson 2002) and my previous research (Wright 2005, Wright 2008), which had a similar design as this study, was beneficial to me in this regard.

Although I made notes of conversations from the first day in the field, it was only after six months or so that I could be more certain that what I was hearing was not something affected by my own presence. 'Contextual notes' as opposed to 'conversational' notes were written up soon after I had left the field, as suggested by Hammersley and Atkinson (2002). However, some notes were written up whilst I was still on-site. These were situations where I was asking questions to individuals or small groups. I would always ask, "Do you mind if I write myself a few notes?" The danger of this is that the participants may have felt under some kind of pressure or that they should answer in certain ways, but I felt that the taking of a few notes was broadly congruent with the social setting (Hammersley and Atkinson 2002). The brief gap between actual events and physically typing them out at home later that day also gave me the advantage of being able to piece situations together and recall events that were relevant and interesting and that may have led to on-going matters of interest. This process took a considerable amount of time, but was vital in turning these jottings into a valuable and

useable resource. After the lengthy job of writing up the field notes, the ethnographer withdraws from the field to weave the strands of field notes into an ethnographic story (Emerson et al 2002). Perhaps this description is somewhat impractical and misleading. In this case I was 'active' in the field for nearly three years and during this phase of collecting data, some elements of writing, or at least starting to 'get something down' did occur. At the time of submission, I was still in contact with a few of the participants, checking on their progress from time to time.

Field notes were taken in the first person as suggested by Emerson et al (2002; 360) who believe that, "first-person writing is especially useful when the ethnographer is part of the group, seeing incidents through their own eyes and allowing the reader an insider's view of actions". These narratives do not simply report events but rather give the teller's perspective of meaning (Cortazzi, 2002). My notes were also recorded heeding the words of Lofland & Lofland (1995; 95-6) who advise that "You need not attempt to employ totally correct grammar, punctuate with proprietary, hit the right keys, say any polite things, or be guarded about your feelings or use any other niceties most people affect for strangers. The objective for field notes rather, is to get information down, as correctly as you can and be as honest with yourself as possible."

It should be noted that although exhaustive notes were taken, these notes could never provide a complete record. They were produced incrementally and without sustained logic or underlying principle due to the assumption that not every observation will ultimately be useful for the finished project. This practice, in itself, acted as a filtering, funnelling, sampling process. Themes did start to emerge in the writing of field notes and this led to

asking further questions and asking similar questions to other participants. So as the study progressed, my field notes probably became more focused; issues and themes emerged which I then wanted to explore in more detail (Hammersley and Atkinson 2002).

3.5.2 Informal Interviews

There is a widely held belief that interviews are an effective way to generate information about lived experience and its meaning (Cohen et al 2007). However, asking questions and obtaining answers is much more difficult than it sounds; finding the right questions and then asking them in the right way can be far from easy (Fontana and Frey 2000). Time in the field allowed me to build some rapport with the participants before any of the more detailed interviews began. 'Interviewing' refers to a range of strategies that covers asking questions, from casual conversations to informal and formal interview (Jorgensen 1989). My definition of interviews here encompasses this wider definition; less formal interviews can produce succinct and heartfelt feelings that other more formal situations may not (Sands 2002).

The more detailed interviews followed a fairly unstructured approach, and allowed the participants to wander from subject to subject whilst at the same time bringing them back to the area I wanted to know more about. This approach often led to some unexpected and interesting 'twists and turns' (Heyl 2002) and the discussion of areas I may not have asked about. For example, one of the participants shared some very personal reflections on his relationship with his father and how this had changed in the last few years. However, it should be realised that what an interviewee chooses to share with the researcher reflects the condition of their relationship and the interview situation. This was the case with one of the

participants with whom I built a trusting relationship; the amount and detail of our conversations grew demonstrably over time.

Some believe that the ethnographer should record interviews, as recollections alone cannot be completely relied upon (Silverman 2000). However, in this circumstance, permission must be granted from the participants; it should also be noted that transcription can be a long process (Jones et al 2002). During previous research I had found that the presence of the tape recorder negatively affected certain, otherwise talkative, individuals (Gratton and Jones 2010). This resulted in me moving away from recording all interviews; some subsequently were noted and written up later. This may have changed the dynamic somewhat as I felt that the participants spoke more freely and openly when not in the presence of a tape recorder; the research took on the feel of something more covert at this early stage. That said my perception over the course of the study was that I slowly melted away into the background like the 'research chameleon' that Toms and Kirk (2006) describe.

According to Gratton and Jones (2010) the interviewer should appear non-judgemental in that their own view should not be apparent so as not to influence the participant in any way; I tried at all times not to make any statements during my interactions with the players, just listening and asking some prompting questions. Some participant recollections may be unreliable (Allan 2002) and as a way to overcome this, questioning over time may be beneficial; this is something I tried to do, to test 'facts' I had been given and in some cases to check information with others like the course leader. This, coupled with my time in the field, led to what I believe is as close to the truth as I could get. It should be noted though that, as Oakley (1986; 252) points out, "interviewees are people with considerable potential for

sabotaging the attempt to research them". This was another reason for me to steer away from formal interview sessions, but rather to ask questions in more relaxed and informal ways. My other tactic here was to become part of the golf landscape and structure; as well as being Jonathan the researcher, I was Jonathan from the PGA. To this end I could ask about future plans of the participants, whether to play professionally, to become a club Professional or to do something entirely different, more legitimately. Because of my knowledge of the culture of golf I was able to sense check what I was hearing. The interview is not a neutral tool, but an active interaction between two people leading to negotiated, contextually based results.

3.6 Data Analysis

3.6.1 Grounded theory

Grounded theory was used in this study to analyse data and to generate insight and findings. This approach requires researchers to go out in to the field and collect data in order to develop a theory "based on and relevant to the participants experience" (Holt et al 2012; 276). When using grounded theory, the researcher should be open to new ideas, relationships and suggestions that are evident in what respondents say or do (Allen 2002) and this is one of its great strengths; it does not start with a theory to test and validate, but rather, it allows data to emerge which can then be interpreted and theory generated on the basis of what is found. Practically, once data begins to be gathered, grounded theory is a "process by which the analyst becomes more and more 'grounded' in the data and develops increasingly richer concepts and models of how the phenomenon being studied really works" (Ryan and Bernard 2000; 782). Whilst I gathered the data I was able to build up an increasingly sophisticated

understanding of the behaviours I witnessed. As I progressed, the ideas and concepts I began to develop did indeed become richer and more complex.

One shortcoming of the grounded theory approach though is that it relies on single cases and situations. In their writing concerning grounded theory, Glaser and Strauss (1967, 1979) indicated that single cases could help develop theories that can then be applied to other cases for verification or otherwise. These generated theories do not need to perfectly describe the area, but account for relevant behaviour. However, this perspective is fraught with danger; the findings of a single situation, with a particular set of participants, are usually demonstrable of that situation only and cannot reasonably be generalised to other situations or the population. It should be noted that this study was only designed to tell the story of this situation and generalisations regarding other institutions or programmes were not made. It was hoped that this study along with a multitude of others in the area, could help build a picture so that a degree of understanding could be drawn.

This study rejects the somewhat rigid approach to grounded theory of Glaser and Strauss but uses the interpretative constructivist approach suggested by Charmaz (2000, 2014). This takes a middle ground between postmodernism and positivism and offers a way of taking the theory forward (Mills et al 2006). The original incarnation of grounded theory and subsequent developments involved a rather inflexible approach to the process of the generation of concepts; this involved developing codes, writing memos, evaluation and testing the data which eventually led to the generation of theory. However, this method does not take into consideration the mutual creation of knowledge by the 'viewer' and 'viewed' (Charmaz 2000). Taking these factors into account seemed more appropriate for this study especially when considered in light of the earlier discussion concerning reflexivity and the

situatedness of the researcher and participants. For these reasons, and to allow for an interpretative understanding of the subject's meaning, this research followed a constructivist approach to grounded theory (Charmaz 2014). This interpretation of grounded theory can be used as a more open-ended practice that stresses its emergent, constructivist elements: "We can use grounded theory methods as flexible, heuristic strategies rather than as formulaic procedures" (Charmaz 2000; 510). This research seeks to address human realities and assumes the existence of real worlds, including multiple voices, views and visions of lived experiences.

I believed that grounded theory was an appropriate tool to employ because, as Charmaz and Mitchell (2002) identify, the researcher can use flexible strategies for collecting and analysing data; therefore the incisiveness of the study can be heightened by streamlining field work and moving the research towards theoretical interpretation and analysis. The approach involves an oscillation between data and analysis, before returning to the field to gather further de-limited data and refining the emerging theoretical framework. Thus, lengthy unfocused time spent in the field, and superficial and random data collection is minimised (Charmaz and Mitchell 2002). Practically, this meant that once I was able to identify the emerging themes and issues, I went back to the field to ask specific questions related to them.

3.6.2 Theory Generation

When using grounded theory, Charmaz and Mitchell (2002) say that the amassed 'thick description' described by Geertz (1993) should be used, but not forced, into preconceived categories and thus develop 'thick interpretations' (Denzin 1989). During this study I was at pains not to force categories, however, my own reading and knowledge around issues

concerning young people in sports meant that I did have some insight in the areas that began to emerge. As such, this study does have a deductive element to the generation of theory. The expectation of Glaser (1992) that any study such as this can be totally inductive is questionable, and potentially its use long-winded and unfocused.

The analysis of the data and memo writing began at an early stage and this helped to facilitate the refining and defining of ideas throughout the study (Charmaz 2000). This process in itself led me to ask further questions, to look at the data in different ways and to keep focused, all of which helped to identify and develop potential theory. I also used what Charmaz (2014) calls theoretical sampling. Practically, this approach involved seeking out individuals for whom the processes being studied are most likely to occur (Denzin and Lincoln 2000b). At the same time, a process of constant comparison – in this case grounded theory - was necessary, as the researcher seeks to develop an understanding that encompasses all instances of the process under investigation. Categories are thus filled out by theoretical sampling which also takes the form of finding gaps in categories, and going back to the field to collect delimited data to fill in these conceptual gaps (Charmaz 2014). For example, this meant that as my category of 'Player' emerged, I would go back to the field to ask further questions such as 'What are your long term playing goals', 'How are you going to go about achieving this?', and 'What are the benefits of the educational parts of the course?'. Answers to these questions can be added to the existing data and categories and ideas can be further refined. This analysis leads to the initial writing of the piece that "is not just a mopping-up activity at the end of a research project. Writing is also a way of 'knowing' – a method of discovery and analysis" (Richardson 2000; 923). Thus the aim at this stage was to refine ideas. The process of grounded theory is, therefore, far from the one-stop interviewing of other methods. Conversely, grounded theory requires us to go back to the field to saturate the findings of the

study (Charmaz 2000). This process necessitates the need to stay in the field for a significant period; my three years of study in the field proved sufficient to produce the results detailed here.

3.7 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter sets out to describe the methodological issues considered and addressed during this research. The study was carried out from an interpretivist standpoint employing an ethnographic approach and using the thick description and reflexivity that has become preeminent in the sociology of sport (Donnelly 2007). This ethnographic approach necessitated longevity in the field; I spent over three years in, and around, the participants. The aims of this methodology were to understand the experiences of the apprentice golfers and to reconstruct these experiences in an accessible form. In terms of the validity and reliability of the constructivist approach used here, the criteria used to judge the strength of the research could be trustworthiness, credibility, and conformability (Denzin and Lincoln 2000a).

The chapter explores the complex issues of researcher reflection and social positioning that occur as a result of the nature of field work, the messy reality of the ethnographic approach, and how these issues were dealt with. The research used the following tools of inquiry: observation, informal interview and the writing of field notes. Collected data was then analysed using a grounded theory approach.

Having set out the methodological basis of the study, the next five chapters will go on to address the key questions and issues that emerged as a result of the study findings, beginning with a description of the participants' experiences within the AASE Golf programme.

CHAPTER 4: DAZZLING DREAMS

4.1 Chapter Introduction

In the context of competitive sport, including golf, there is often the promise of fame, fortune and success. Sport has now become a legitimate career choice and there is a culture in place that suggests that, with discipline and hard work, any aspiring athlete will be able to fulfil their sporting dreams (Coakley and Pike 2014). This meritocratic outlook along with the promise of attractive rewards means that large numbers of young people are investing the majority of their time training, practising and, they hope, working towards a career in professional sport. For the apprentice golfers in this research their journey through the AASE programme began with high hopes and a positive outlook:

Field note - March 2010 Mid-Town car park

> *So, Alex (the college course leader) tells me that the AASE students are special; they get special kit, free access to college facilities like the gym and if the evidence of today is anything to go by, receive special treatment in the classroom. The college and EGU/EWGA leaflets promoting AASE appear to hold up these young people as 'the future of golf' and that this is the start of a career that will see them travel the world, earn millions and find fame and fortune. The package on offer from the college and golfing bodies does therefore seem irresistible, fantastic and somewhat dazzling! Can this possibly be the reality?*

This chapter describes apprentice golfers first experiences of the AASE programme and in so doing begins to address research question 1 (the overarching question of this research):

Research question 1 - What are the participants' expectations, experiences and outcomes of AASE in Golf?

What is the narrative of the participants' journey through AASE in golf?

- What are the expectations of the apprentice golfers before during and after the course and how does this journey change their perspectives?
- What are the experiences of these apprentice golfers during the golf elements of the course?
- How do the golf coaches and college staff members encounter the process?
- What is next for the students, the exit routes, and are these in line with expectations at the start of the course?

This chapter introduces the key participants and depicts the initial contact between the apprentice golfers, the college and the golf coaches. At this point the golfers were filled with optimism about the course and their future careers; this led me to describe this period of time as being 'dazzling' for the apprentice golfers.

The following four chapters will follow the journey of the apprentice golfers through the AASE programme and these chapters will address the research questions directly. Chapter 5 will focus on communities of practice (research question 2), Chapter 6 will assess golf coaching (research question 3), Chapter 7 will look at early and late specialisation (research

question 4) and finally, within Chapter 8 the overall experiences and mediated journeys of the golfers will be assessed (research questions 1 and 5).

I did hope to write the results and discussion sections of this piece in a chronological fashion. However, the size of these chapters along with the complexity of the subject areas meant that I decided to present this information by theme instead. Chapter 9 reflects on the whole piece and provides updates from individual apprentice golfers as well as of the AASE programme itself.

There are many factors that mediate the journey of individuals through sport. The exploration of such factors for the apprentice golfers followed in this study was encapsulated within research question 5:

Research question 5 - What have been the critical factors that have mediated the journeys of the apprentice golfers?

- What specifically are these episodes?
- Is there any pattern emerging across the group?
- How have these events influenced the direction of the participants' journeys?

The four particular factors identified in the earlier Literature Review, will be used throughout the following chapters to help understand and depict the path of the these apprentice golfers through the AASE programme as well as in their journey up to entry and subsequent journeys after the programme had finished. As a reminder, these factors have been classified here as 'talent system', 'luck', 'critical episodes', and 'personal outlook'. Although not an exhaustive

list, these factors are significant in the journey of young people in sport and talent pathways. These factors will be referred to in the chapter and narrative as follows:

- 'Talent system' will refer to the structure of golf and the England talent pathway and related issues such as selection to squads and structure of programmes. These factors are completely out of the control of the apprentice golfers and so they must fit into the requirements of the 'talent system' or risk their membership of it.

- 'Luck' will refer to other factors such as, but not limited to, their social background and family, being in the 'right place at the right time', or conversely, being in the 'wrong place at the wrong time' and other factors such as which coach they were assigned during the programme. Largely the apprentice golfers had little control over these factors.

- 'Critical episodes' will refer to moments in time or periods when a particular pathway or trajectory may change, or a significant event in the life of the apprentice golfer, such as injury or a poor experience with a coach. Due to their nature many of the causes or antecedents of these episodes are out of the control of the apprentice golfers.

- 'Personal outlook', the individuals' reaction to events, will also be considered. This 'personal outlook' does give the opportunity for individual agency on the part of the apprentice golfer; however the other factors do not.

4.2 Introducing the key participants

This study follows a group of apprentice golfers through their journey in AASE that began with their attendance at the golf trial. This trial was part of the recruitment process to get access to the course with the prospect of 'making it' in professional golf - referred to here as playing professionally for a living. The study followed these apprentice golfers all the way through the two years of the programme and concludes with their exit routes from the course and reflections on their journey. As well as the apprentice golfers there were also members of college staff, golf coaches and others who are described and included here. There follows a brief description of some of the key participants; a full list of all the participants can be found in Appendix 4:

Alex. The AASE course leader and the person who draws the whole programme together, a member of staff at Mid-Town College. Alex was the main gatekeeper for this research and without his help it would not have been possible. Alex spends most of his time at Mid-Town College and delivers some parts of the course. Alex also tries to attend 'golf training' when he can, often challenging the apprentice golfers to 'see who can hit it furthest/closest'. An optimist, full of energy and enthusiasm.

Billy. One of the two golf coaches who are deployed on the AASE course. A PGA 'Advanced Fellow' Golf Professional ('Advanced Fellow' means that an individual will have undertaken a significant amount of professional development over a long period of time). Billy is regarded as a 'good coach' both locally and nationally. He specialises in coaching performance players and is a former national academy level coach. Billy believes in golf

'science' and has a distinct personal model of how the golf swing should be performed. Billy was coaching many of the young golfers privately before they enrolled on the programme.

Danny. The national manager of the AASE programme, works for the National Governing bodies EGU/EWGA. He works closely with the Performance Directors looking at the England talent pathway.

Dexter. An apprentice golfer. Dexter played his way into the final of the Faldo Series before he began AASE. The Faldo series is a programme of competitions founded and run by English golfer Sir Nick Faldo, "to give opportunity to young people through golf and to help identify and nurture the next generation of champions" (Faldo Series 2014). Dexter is one of the youngest in the group, just 16 on Trials Day. Dexter wants to make it as a playing professional and his dad liked the educational element of the AASE course as a back up in case this plan did not work out.

Guy. An apprentice golfer. Guy was a high-level ice hockey player before injury forced early retirement. He took up golf to kill time whilst recovering from his ice hockey injury after seeing his dad play.

Nigel. One of the golf coaches, a PGA Professional. Locally regarded as a good coach of developing golfers. Nigel also runs and stocks a number of golf shop businesses locally.

Paul. An apprentice golfer. Paul was the 'star' golfer of the group, an early specialiser and already a national player (for Wales) when he joined the course. Tired of practice, Paul would

'come alive' when playing. Often other apprentice golfers would watch Paul play and practise to try to find out why he was so good.

Stephen. One of the tutors of the course at the college, also a PGA Golf Professional. Stephen delivers much of the content of the course at Mid-Town College that includes 'study skills'. Stephen does much of the 'chasing around' to ensure that all work is in on time and that the apprentice golfers complete the course.

Wes. An apprentice golfer. Wes dreams of playing professionally but realises he needs some education as a back up. Wes has multiple golf coaches, his own coach, county coach, and once on the AASE programme, an AASE coach too. He seemed to handle this quite well; his father was a PGA Professional at one time and is the 'sounding board' for Wes and his golf development.

4.3 Trials Day, the start of the journey

The start of the AASE experience for these young golfers was Trials Day that took place at Bridge Golf Club in August 2009. The young golfers had completed an application form and had been invited to attend the day for a formal interview and the golf assessment. In their promotional leaflet EGU/EWGA (2009; 4) say, that "[golf] selection will include some or all of the following; performance in an 18 hole stroke play qualifying event; skills tests; assessment by a PGA Coach; previous academic performance; previous performance in golf tournaments and a selection interview".

The golf selection process was designed to assess golfing ability and potential. Clearly the young golfers who attend the day were about to experience a 'critical episode' in their golfing

(and wider) career and life journey. The promotional material that EGU/EWGA put together was very aspirational and extensively uses terms like "world class" and "performance". By their presence at the trial the young golfers, and possibly their parents, believe that the mix of sport and education is a desirable one. So, would they make the grade and get a place? Was this the end of the road for their golf career, or the route to glory? In football, entry into academies is extremely competitive (Bourke 2003) and many do not make it past this selection stage.

Vignette – 14th August 2009

I'm at the range with the coaches and we talk about the golf element of the selection process for the course and talent identification in general. The coaches say that the college-led golf selection process (actually designed by them) is not ideal; the coaches talk about how it could be improved but fail to come up with much. Billy and Nigel have identified that the criteria they will be using are: Does the player demonstrate a good enough standard (there are requirements set by the governing body in terms of handicap), will they work hard enough, and what potential do they have? The coaches suggest that they could try and watch the golfers play on the course but they could have a good/bad day and the result would be false –also this would be very time consuming. Nigel says "We could just go on handicaps but this does not really give an accurate picture." Handicaps, while indicative of a level of play, can be seen a bit of a blunt instrument as they don't reflect how often a player has played to that standard or the standard of course they have played.

So without a satisfactory way of assessing a player's ability during the trial, the coaches appear to fall back on what they know and are used to; seeing the golfers in

action on the driving range and assessing them from their demeanour there. They also say that they will give some instruction in order to gauge how each golfer reacts; I'm not sure about this as all these young golfers will surely already have some kind of coaching and surely this is just treading on other coaches' toes, especially if they don't even make it to the programme? Anecdotally, player confusion, facilitated by multiple coaches, is a problem in the England talent pathway. It seems to be then that this AASE approach is exacerbating the problem; these coaches who have (mostly) never seen these players before will give them a coaching point and see how they react, that could be very damaging and incredibly self-indulgent. I thought this was a player-centred approach, not a coach-centred one!

The players hit some balls, the coaches wander around the range watching the young golfers, arms crossed, looking quite serious.

After a while the coaches go down the line with each player in turn – they start from opposite ends of the range. Players are required to hit some shots with a 6 iron and asked other questions such as what they are working on technically. When the coaches have spoken to all the players they gather everyone in one bay and each takes it in turn to hit 3 driver shots...the pressure is on here...all in the same bay and with everybody watching, including some parents. Some crack under the pressure, others seem to thrive on it; Dexter is literally shaking when he is asked to play his shots but the feedback from that coaches that day was that all these 'kids' would be good enough, including Dexter to be offered a place on the course. Dexter is smaller than most and clearly not as physically developed. I wonder if this will affect his potential selection.

Pretty soon it's on to the next batch, next set of five golfers, next set of five – it's a selection boot camp!

At the end of the day, the coaches tell me that all of the candidates looked good enough to be offered a place on the course – "nerves had played a part with some but they were all strong and will all get a place" says Billy. It seems strange that ALL the golfers had reached the standard; surely the whole basis of the trial is to select who they wanted rather than just take them all?

What did strike me during the day was that many of the players seemed to know the coaches. As it turns out the coaches have directed many of their 'own' students to the programme. This led to some familiarity with certain players, while others were complete strangers. I wonder how this correlated with performance on the day and subsequent selection.

Billy tells me that once it became known he was a coach on the programme, some individuals came to him for lessons - he thinks with the hope of being looked upon favourably in the selection process. As it turns out it was not much of a factor as they were all accepted anyway!

Later, Alex tells me it has been a good day. He says that potentially all of these young golfers will be offered a place and he is trying to secure more places so that the college will be able to accommodate them all. So if they all get a place and the college is applying for more places is this just a waste of the day – does the college want as many places as they can to get the income that comes with them and can then

fill the places up after that? If this is the case, is this all about the funding and income or about excellence in golf performance? How do EGU/EWGA check that standard? Or do they just trust the college?

The process detailed above is an interesting method of talent identification. It was based on 20-30 minutes of performance in a totally strange environment, on a driving range where golf performance does not actually take place; this must have led to some degree of inconsistency of selection that Rongen et al (2015) describe. The coaches did not follow the selection methods that EGU/EWGA (2009) suggest, and therefore this was a case of 'talent system' criteria not being followed by the college. However, the criteria that were set out by EGU/EWGA do seem to very ambiguous with no detail behind each criterion. This must surely mean that subjectivity was a factor across the colleges who run the programme, another element of 'luck' here for these young golfers to contend with. Selection could just rely on handicaps but this may not really give an accurate picture, as Nigel suggested. The coaches were also looking for potential and work ethic as well as handicap, which can be played on to give a false impression; once a good level of handicap is achieved, the player may not then 'enter a card' (score) for another six to eight months but retain the low handicap. Many of the national or regional tournaments played by young golfers were only available to those with a low enough handicap. Therefore when this low handicap is achieved, they do not risk playing again as they my risk their handicap going up. EGU/EWGA did suggest a playing day when the young golfers have a chance to play and post a score while the coaches follow them and observe their play and demeanour. However, this would have taken longer and cost more money in terms of the coaches' time (perhaps budget was the driver here?) but this does mean that the college had already contradicted the selection process that EGU/EWGA had set out. As this process had been undertaken in a less

than robust fashion by the college, this had perhaps increased the element of 'luck' for the young golfers but also for EGU/EWGA in attracting the right individuals to the programme.

The coaches here were in a position of ultimate power where their professional knowledge and expertise were trusted to make the right decision (Jones and Wallace 2006), but on what was this based? Who performs three shots the best? Who looks attentive? Who displays the best 'personal outlook'? Worse still, was the concern that these coaches are privately retained by some of these players already and as such may not want to bite the hand that feeds. The coaches, in this regard, seemed to view themselves as a kind of coaching 'fairy godmother', who were trusted to show their expertise and select the right young people (Potrac and Cassidy 2006). Because the coaches held so much power, not just in the selection and talent identification process, you would have thought that they would have been recruited with the aid of an open recruitment process based on a clear job description and role specification – unfortunately, this is not the case and Alex tells me that he "asked around and someone recommended these two coaches to me, I think they're very good". They may well be the right coaches and Alex may have struck 'lucky', but then he may not done. The whole process looked lax and unprofessional and an indictment of the 'talent system' that was in place.

Tranckle and Cushion (2006) suggest that coaches are in a good position to make decisions regarding an individual's career trajectory through talent pathways, but this assumes they have the knowledge, experience and expertise to make these decisions. However, they go on to say that this is not straightforward as "coaches may recruit performers who share similar values, resulting in congruence between the value framework of the coach and performer" (Tranckle and Cushion 2006; 279). So perhaps here the coaches were consciously or

unconsciously recruiting the players they knew. This is another example of how ‘luck’ played a part in the journeys and trajectories of the young golfers. The selection process must surely attempt to come from a perspective of neutralising this. What advantage do the players have who are already coached by the two coaches and if by positioning themselves as existing pupils of the coach, have the young golfers actually managed their own ‘luck’ by increasing their chances of selection? Roderick (2006b) talks about the need for footballers to cultivate their skills of impression management, in order to secure their place in the team. As such they must convey certain qualities that are focused on a strong work ethic and loyalty to the football club. This appears to be the same activity that was going on here in Trials Day. McGillivray et al (2005) say that football managers also tend to go for players they know already, as they can be sure of their mentality and pliability. Again, a parallel here, but this only works if the impression of the player is a good one; if the coach was not impressed by that individual, then their chances of being offered a place may be the same or even slimmer than those young golfers they do not know.

It appeared that the governing body offered no assistance or staff time to the colleges in terms of how to run these assessment days, so although they had control over the funding and had the power to allocate places to colleges, they did not give any guidance or assistance to colleges in controlling quality, aside from loose criteria. The colleges wanted to allocate as many places as they could in order to secure maximum revenue, but EGU/EWGA wanted to develop quality players for its England talent pathway; this compromise was already evident and the course had not even started yet.

It does seem odd that even though there was a trial process and selection criteria, all the young people who wanted a place, were offered one. Platts and Smith (2009) say that when football was using the Youth Training scheme the clubs signed up more and more trainees so that they could access funding. However, this had the result of recruiting more players, the majority of whom then dropped out, as there were no more places on the talent pathway available, hence having a detrimental effect on the welfare of these young footballers. Could the same have been happening here? What was this programme about, funding or talent? The college was bound to have a different perspective from the governing body, and this is naturally driven by funding, but therefore should the governing body have offered some assistance and assess on certain standards in order to meet their outcomes?

CHAPTER 5: COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE

5.1 Chapter Introduction

During field work it was apparent that there were several different groups or communities within the programme, initially, the apprentice golfers, the golf coaches and the college staff. These groups shared the common pursuit or passion that Wenger (2005) describes. This chapter then addresses research question 2:

Research question 2 - To what extent is there a community of practice within AASE?

- Do the young golfers collectively act as a community of practice?
- Are there separate communities within the apprentice golfers?
- Do the coaches act as a community of practice?
- Do apprentice golfers and coaches act as a collective community of practice during the golf lessons?

For the apprentice golfers the common initial pursuit was to become a professional golfer. It appeared that all of the apprentice golfers had committed to the AASE concept of golf and education together as a step towards this career goal; they had all signed up and willingly agreed to participate and therefore become part of this domain. However, as time went by it became increasingly apparent to me that there were distinct cohorts of individuals, and therefore communities of practice, within the apprentice golfer population, with their own particular domain, community and practice (Lave and Wenger 2006). Highlighting and identifying these distinct groups made it easier for me to rationalise my observations and to

explain them to others. It was for this reason that I decided to use communities of practice as a way to write, describe and frame this research.

However, the reality as described by the communities of practice approach is neither clear nor straightforward. Individuals belonged to different communities at the same time and, during their time on the course, moved around within those communities. The pull or belonging to one community might wane whilst another would grow stronger. Interestingly, those who withdrew from some of the identified communities showed a greater propensity to drop out from the course. The course leader and coaches seemed to be unaware of the groupings and, as such, were not able to meet the needs of participants and maximise their achievements and/or prevent them from dropping out.

5.2 Apprentice golfers: domain, community and practice

Golf is usually an individual sport and coaching is typically delivered between a coach and single golfer. However, the AASE context was different as the cohort of apprentice golfers attended the golf training day as a group during which the coaches taught them one after the other. At the beginning of the AASE journey the golf coaching sessions were attended by all of the apprentice golfers and as a group they took part in legitimate peripheral participation within this golf coaching context; they were learning how to participate in this community. There was therefore an atmosphere akin to that of a squad, a community of which these golfers were part. Apprentice golfers would often sit in on each other's lessons. This is a very unusual practice in golf and one that speaks of shared practice and shared learning:

Vignette – 11th December 2009, Paul and Simon: Paul's lesson

I'm at the golf range sitting in on the coaching and just generally seeing what's going on. Paul, one of the apprentice golfers, is having a one-to-one coaching session, with Billy. Billy says that he sees Paul at national squad get-togethers; Billy being one of the national coaches and Paul one of the players. This is a happy coincidence for both, I'm sure, as they can work on consistent areas.

Paul's lesson is taking place with Simon looking on – this seems to happen quite a lot – Paul does not seem to have a problem with this. Simon asks what he can do to be as good as Paul as he is 5 shots better in terms of handicap – Billy suggests that they play together some more and that he can learn from Paul – Paul says that playing in events is the key to improving, by actually playing in competitions and gaining experience. As Paul's lesson comes to a close, Ross and Simon hang around and look at and watch what's going on – they all input into the matter being discussed and study Paul's swing on the screen. This is not the usual way golf coaching is delivered; it's an individual game most of the time and players work with coaches (even in team events) on a one-to-one basis.

Field note - January 2010

Golf coaching usually happens one-to-one with nobody else in attendance, but the feeling when you walk onto the driving range here is that of a squad. It's not a group of individuals going about their own practice, the players are a collective; many watch on as others have their lessons and try to understand what the coach is doing

and how the other player is moving/swinging. They almost act as 'mini-coaches' for each other, understanding each other's faults and areas for work.
This is different from the players who are not in AASE and who are trying to make it on their own. Practice can be a very lonely, boring and laborious pursuit; especially when you are 17 years old and have been doing it 'seriously' for 11 years like Paul has before he joined the programme.

Billy says that this had had an effect on Paul, who is not really motivated at all by practice, but "comes alive" when he is playing. Maybe this is the test – getting through the hours of practice, if you get through this then you will make it, or have made it; a war of attrition, whoever is left standing is the winner. Is determination and perseverance the key factor in elite performance? All of the apprentice golfers studied here have talent and natural ability; their results and handicaps show that they can play the game well, but who will stick with it?

5.3 Apprentice golfers, the 'Special Ones'

Within Mid-Town College (a further education college), the apprentice golfers were high profile and visible. The apprentice golfers attended Mid-Town for three days a week normally during term time and mixed with other young people doing all kinds of other courses such as carpentry, performing arts, plastering, catering and beauty therapy. However, apprentice golfers were perceived as different to the other young people at the college. Not only were they the 'sports stars', one representing his country at national level, but also they were seen as high profile, and perhaps high value, by the college itself. In this way the

college appeared to believe that ‘apprentice golfers are special’, and as such treated them in a different ways to regular students.

Field note - March 2010 Mid-Town College

I visit the college to get a feel for the young golfer’s behaviour in the educational setting. The session I attend is a non-taught two hour session where students are able to catch up with work and do what they need to do. Having parked my car, I stroll to the place where Alex said we should meet – feels odd, like I’m so very old compared to the students who wander around me and yet strangely familiar in that it doesn’t feel so long that I was in these educational settings myself. As I walk past the front entrance to the college I notice a large banner at the front which declares that this is a college that is supported by EGU/EWGA which runs the AASE program – later I learn that the golfers receive special treatment here too in that they are given free gym membership and subsidised kit unlike all the other students in the college...what effect does this have on work ethic and motivation I wonder?

In the classroom...

Some latecomers arrive and they are taken aside by Ned who ‘has a word’ with them – Ned is an AASE graduate himself who only left a couple of years ago and has now come back to be the classroom assistant/student mentor. I ask about attendance and I’m told that there is an expectation that attendance is 90%. If students fall below this then questions are asked, but not so much of the golf guys – Stephen (a tutor) says that they can get away with more than any other group of students in the college;

their special status and the capital that this represents, clearly allows them extra leeway. Stephen tells me that in his tutor group virtually all of the students are at 100% attendance, unlike the golfers whose attendance is somewhat less than this – so they are clearly given special treatment here too. Stephen also tells me that the golf students also have free use of the gym, unlike any other student body in the college, but don't really use it. He says

"I would be jumping all over that, but these guys don't really use it that much...unbelievable".

Stephen then mentions the theory of writer Daniel Coyle, who believes that talent should not be cosseted as it "makes them soft", what they need is just basic facilities where the hard working and dedicated will thrive; the Golf students here are treated a bit like royalty - what effect does this have? These golfers are afforded special status; they are given lots of extras that the other students don't have, yet they don't take advantage of them.

Often communities of practice exist without a formal recognition of their existence or an acknowledgement of its benefit. However, the apprentice golfers here were clearly identified and acknowledged as a separate group within the college, another element of how the 'talent system' manifests itself; they had a clear domain, community and practice within the college and at the start of their AASE journey appeared to be one big community of practice. So how did they view themselves; are they students, golfers or AASE Golfers? Was the academic achievement at all important to them and their view of themselves?

Field note - June 2010, Wes

I meet Wes at the end of the first year of the program at xxxxx Golf Club where he is practising; it's a busy day at the club and there is a society visiting today. I'm there for a meeting and arrive just before 1000 and am meeting Wes at 1300. I go to the gents and, while washing my hands, the person next to me says, "Hello Jon" – it is of course Wes. I play a bit dumb and say it's a maze here where is the bar, he shows me around a bit and we part agreeing to meet at 1300 as planned.

At 1300, I reappear and sit outside on the terrace – Wes is on the putting green and has not seen me. He practises for a while and then packs up his stuff, sees me and comes over. Before he sits down he has to go and put his golf bag somewhere else as it's not allowed to be on the terrace – golf clubs and their rules hey! He seems a little nervous so when he comes back I thank him for his time and we chit-chat for a minute or two.

Wes says that it's great at the college as they get lots of perks like free gym membership, which he uses a lot, especially in the winter months. I ask if he feels special as a golfer at the college – he says

"Yes and no – when we are there (2 days a week) we just a look and act like all the others"

JW "but there are big posters and signs that are up highlighting the golfers and the programme"

Wes "yeah, it's a bit embarrassing really"

Apprentice golfers received subsidised golf kit and acted as ambassadors for a clothing brand. Wes was very aware that if he was going to play on the tour he would need the help of some sponsors and has begun to make some links with the clothing manufacturer and with a football celebrity who has expressed a desire to help aspiring local golf professionals. However, the level of profile at the college that this special treatment afforded was clearly a little uncomfortable for Wes.

Wes largely isolated himself within the group; he did not embrace the interactive community experience with the other players. Wes says that he did not feel special and that around college the golf students were not obvious, but he did take advantage of the facilities and opportunities. He said that having subsidised kit was great and that if, and when, he makes it he would use this connection to the manufacturer to seek some sponsorship to play some entry fees to tournaments. He seemed so much switched on than the others; had they thought about this?

As part of their special treatment and package these apprentice golfers were taken to the national golf centre for what was effectively a training camp.

Field note - March 2010, National Golf Centre

I arrive and find the guys in the clubhouse just finishing off their lunch.
I sit down and have a chat to Nigel who says that Alex has no hair left on his head after a couple of moments of high jinks over the last few days – someone was sick in

the hotel lounge and they were not happy, so Alex made the apprentice golfers clear it up!! Alex says that there have been a few incidents but all has gone OK. He runs me through the program of what has happened the last few days – walking the course and producing yardage charts, sports psych, putting and short game practice etc. Jake is sitting next to Billy and fondling his ear – Billy asks if I can take him away when I leave – I say I don't really have room for him! High spirits in the camp it seems.

The group goes off to the next session and I am left with Ned and we have a catch up. We talk about the behaviour of the golfers, but he says that he has had some good conversations on the trip with the guys he didn't realise he could have with them and he hopes behaviour, work ethic and application will be better as a result.

I go down to the short game area to see what's happening – the group is split into three – one is with Alex in the classroom, the second doing pitching and short game practice with supervision and the third, where I stay, is doing some putting work. Stephen is also here on the trip; I wasn't expecting to see him there. He tells me that many of the students have surprised him with conversations and maturity – I ask how the guys are going with their studies as if they are behind and not finished then they will have to come back in the holiday time to finish off the work – he says there are a few who are all done but most have some stuff left to do.

Billy and Nigel have a few gizmos to help their teaching and also help the guys set up putting stations – coaching is quite random and just generally when a student asks for it – is this guided learning or just a free for all and a jolly?

Billy says I should go and have a look at a pot bunker that Wes is playing out of – I don't waste this chance and go and speak to Wes who is with one other student in that part of the large practice ground. I ask him about the bunker and we have a chat – I then say that I hear his dad used to be a PGA Professional and he says yes. His dad is now the greenkeeper at a local club and Wes has persuaded him to play again – he had not played for years – but he gets a bit frustrated as he used to be very good. I say that it would be great to meet up over the summer to have a chat and he says that's no problem and we swap numbers – he is now a member at xxx club and we decide to meet there.

I also speak to Ross who finds that one of his clubs has been bent and he is not happy – I give him a bit of advice on how to get it replaced. Alex turns up and asks to see my identification - very funny! He has been doing some sports psychology sessions with one of the groups, they got rid of the specialist, Kyle, who used to perform this function earlier in the year – I wonder why Alex feels like he can replace the expert effectively? Is this to do with saving costs? The programme is advertised as providing this specialist support, so the apprentice golfers now appear to be a little short-changed by this turn of events.

Billy tells me that they have decided to put on some extra coaching sessions over the next four weeks (the summer and out of term time). I make a note to attend these, it appears Alex has found some more money in the budget and can afford to put these extra session on – maybe this is where the saved psychologist money is being spent? Great for the coaches I guess, more time with the apprentice golfers and more money in the pocket.

I ask Jake about his plans after he has finished AASE and he tells me that he plays off 1 now and he would like to play for a living.

Vignette – 12th April 2010, Billy and reflections on the squad trip

I have lunch with Billy to reflect on the trip:

JW "How was it for you?"

Billy "Nobody went down in our estimation and some went up – we all had a great time – there were some behaviour problems, but nothing too serious – there were high spirits just because we were away from home, Alex sorted it out."

JW "Is Alex the bad cop then?"

Billy "(ha!)Well no, he is too soft and the students think so too, I told him this but it's difficult for him – he wants them all to get through and the funding depends on them getting through, but he wants them to start taking decisions for themselves like adults. Going there had such a galvanising effect on everyone though – one student commented on my Facebook page that I had been awesome, so that was nice – we are thinking that it would be great to do the camp at the start of the academic year, as well as then end – we could do all the screening and tests then and really get them ready for the coaching work that would begin during normal term time. I probably shouldn't tell you this but there was an incident in (the town) where some of the local

youths got involved with our guys and what happened next was that the others who were back at the hotel ran down to join the other guys, real team spirit!"

It seemed that the apprentice golfers stuck together when under attack, but this was a special trip to the national centre towards the end of the first year of study; the sun was out, there were great facilities to use, the coaches and staff were relaxed and the apprentice golfers were away from home. On the face of it everything was good and the group had bonded. The practice that Lave and Wenger (2006) describe was taking place, apprentice golfers were sharing a passion for golf and they were interacting and learning and participating as a distinct group.

However, later on the special status of the apprentice golfers became a problem:

Field note – 20th April 2011

JW "How was the behaviour of the students at college during the programme?"

Stephen "Poor, no, really poor and terrible on occasion. The reality is that the students are smart. I don't know for sure but I'm very confident that all the kids picked up on the fact that the college needed them more than they needed the college. The consequence was poor behaviour from some but more commonly was the chasing them through the qualification at the end. The students realised that we, as staff, are going to do whatever we can to pass them so the programme gets its funding. As soon as they realised this even the most engaged would push boundaries and slacken off at times…..

JW "Right…"

Stephen "Can you imagine how those who weren't engaged reacted to that set of circumstances? The lessons would virtually be cancelled because it was impossible to engage with the kids. I had situations where the kids wouldn't break up a game of cards during a lesson or they would vandalise equipment in the class room by throwing whole oranges around…they got labelled the worst group in the entire sports department at the college"

JW "Really…?"

Stephen "The reality is that I am powerless to kick the worst offenders off the course regardless of their behaviour records. As I said, they know the college needs them more"

Individuals who I would later classified as 'Players', Stuart and Ross being notable in this regard, mainly perpetrated the poor behaviour described by Stephen at college. This clearly put Stephen in a difficult position, one that given what he told me had left him frustrated. At this point I saw that the group was polarising into different communities and as time went on I was able to identify that the differing needs of groups within the whole cohort were not being catered for. This led to situations such as those described by Stephen.

5.4 ‘Players’ and ‘Scholars’

5.4.1 Where they started

The AASE programme required apprentice golfers to value, participate and perform in both sports performance and education. However, as this study, and the apprentice golfers’ journey through the course progressed, two distinct groups, or communities, began to emerge. ‘Players’ valued sports performance over education whereas ‘Scholars’ valued education at the expense of sports performance. As such, these two distinct groups developed separate communities of practice, each with its own domain, community and practice (Lave and Wenger 2006). Almost by default, at the start of the journey, all of the apprentice golfers were in one group which valued education and playing opportunity; this was the ethos of the programme to which they had signed up.

It appeared though that all the apprentice golfers were at least inclined to be ‘Players’:

> Field note – 20th April 2011, Stephen
>
> *JW “So what motivates these guys then?”*
>
> *Stephen “It’s all about the playing……I’m certain that every student came on to the course with aspirations to play for a living. It’s a classic example of the golfing pipe dream”*
>
> *JW “What about the education part of the course?”*

Stephen "The open evening also made out to the parents that while their children were training to be elite golfers at the same time they would receive some academic backing. I guess the academic background put the parents at ease!"

JW "But the young golfers weren't interested in that?"

Stephen "Students were sold a dream…… the dream of being an elite golfer"

JW "Why is it a dream, that the point of the course isn't it?"

Stephen "Well, yes, it is but….It's a shame really because the reality is that not many of the students show the work ethic or attitude to make it as a playing professional or even complete their academic studies"

JW "So, to your knowledge how many have 'made it'?"

Stephen "By the end not many of the students still want to be, or stand a chance of, being a playing professionals… the vast majority are seeking alternative careers"

The parents of the apprentice golfers were, it seems, more likely to give approval for their son or daughter to undertake the course based on the educational elements which can be equated to the cultural capital therein:

Vignette - August 2009, Trials Day

It's the trial and I met Dexter's dad while the coaches are putting Dexter through his paces. He has a few concerns about the programme including the golf coaching. He asked me how the AASE coaches would interact with Dexter's coach:

"His coach has done great work with him and brought him on loads, and we want to keep using him".

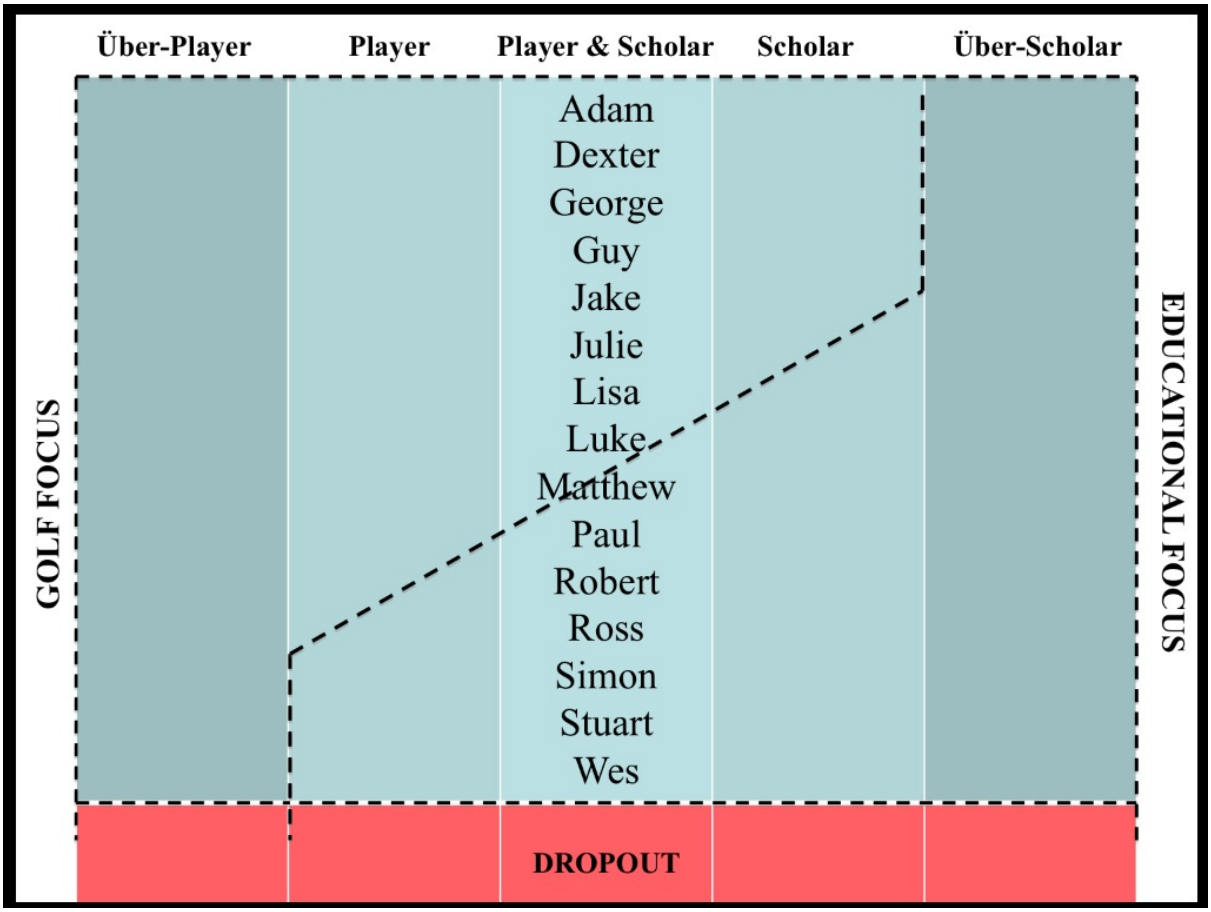
Despite these concerns, Dexter's dad tells me it's good it is that you can follow a playing route while keeping education going:

"It's great, we don't really want him to go all out on his own(just playing), so having a programme and some qualifications seems like the ideal thing for him".

It was, in theory, absolutely possible for any of these apprentice golfers to have taken a pathway that was focused entirely on pursuing the dream of playing glory without the baggage of undertaking education at the same time, but they all chose to take part in the programme. There may have been a number of motivations and reasons for this, such as a desire to pursue both areas or, for instance, a desire to 'keep the parents happy' by ticking the education box while pursuing their playing dreams.

As such, I initially placed the apprentice golfers in a category of 'Player and Scholar' in the following conceptual model of engagement. The model classifies the communities (Player and Scholar, Player, Scholar, Über-Player or Über-Scholar) and attempts to illustrate the

amount of focus these individuals have on golf performance versus education. So, a 'Player and Scholar would be devoting roughly equal focus on golf performance and academic studies. Over the next few sections the changing motivations of the apprentice golfers can be mapped within the model.



[Diagram 2 – Conceptual model of engagement: apprentice golfers, where they started]

5.4.2 Trajectories, the end of year one

As time went by, I was able to see that the idealistic compromise of sport and education was not appealing to all of the apprentice golfers and gradually the group members began to separate and marginalise. These two divergent groups began to form their own communities

of practice with associated domain, community and practice. Very few apprentice golfers remained in the idealistic, targeted and planned middle ground, displaying the qualities and habits of both groups. For these few, the ability to maintain membership of both groups had much to do with their 'personal outlook' on life, one that saw value in both domains.

For 'Scholars' the educational element of the course, and the cultural capital therein was, or became, the most important aspect, education being the main driver and motivation. Typically, 'Scholars' began thinking about a career other than playing golf professionally; playing was a bonus, or a dream that was now beyond reach. During the second half of the final year, 'Scholars' began dropping out of the golf coaching sessions in order to concentrate on their studies - they spent more time at Mid-Town College and less time at Bridge Golf Club. This may have been as a result of realising that they would not progress to the ranks of playing professionally, and that education and the capital this brought with it, would ultimately be of more use than following the dream.

In direct comparison, for 'Players' playing and competing was everything, the dream of playing and the huge potential physical capital this brought was still attractive. 'Players' were undertaking AASE as they were able to continue their golf playing journey and careers and aimed to succeed by playing for a living. The education part seemed to satisfy the parents and, to some degree, the system. Alex, Stephen and others had to guide and cajole 'Players' to finish their modules and coursework. Many saw this as a distraction from their playing time, especially as at that time of year, the Spring, they were preparing to follow their tournament schedule – this was despite the fact that these apprentice golfers knew they were signing up to a programme which encompassed educational elements at the start of the course. 'Players' also had to contend with other difficulties and distractions apart from doing

their academic work. Most of the 'Players' had their own home coach and so many of them did not want the coaching offered by with the college; this 'peripheral non-participation' led to tensions and in some cases drop out from the course.

However, some of the apprentice golfers appeared to display elements and outlooks of both 'Players' and 'Scholars'. For instance, Wes wanted to be a tour player, but realised the need to complete the educational elements of the course. Wes told me that he was up-to-date with all his work and that this was the most important thing for him. However, Wes was in a minority.

Field note - June 2010

On a normal college day it takes Wes one hour and fifteen minutes to get into college by bus. On one of the days when it had been snowing, Wes is there as committed as ever, however, he does say to me that he does rely on the "taxi of Dad" service quite a lot. I ask if the study is important and Wes says yes, very, it's more important than the golf as it's something to fall back on – his dad thinks the same thing – Wes says he wants to get a distinction in all the modules, so far he has mostly distinctions and some merits, but he wants to do as well as he can. Let's see what he ends up with.

Field note – March 2010, National Golf Centre

Wes is hitting balls out of a bunker, I'm watching. When he stops to take a break, we chat.

JW "What are the plans after you finish AASE?" he tells me in a roundabout way that he hopes to play for a living

JW "On tour?"

Wes "Yes, on tour, or I might become a PGA Professional"

Wes's dad was a PGA Professional many years ago, but gave up his status and is now a greenkeeper.

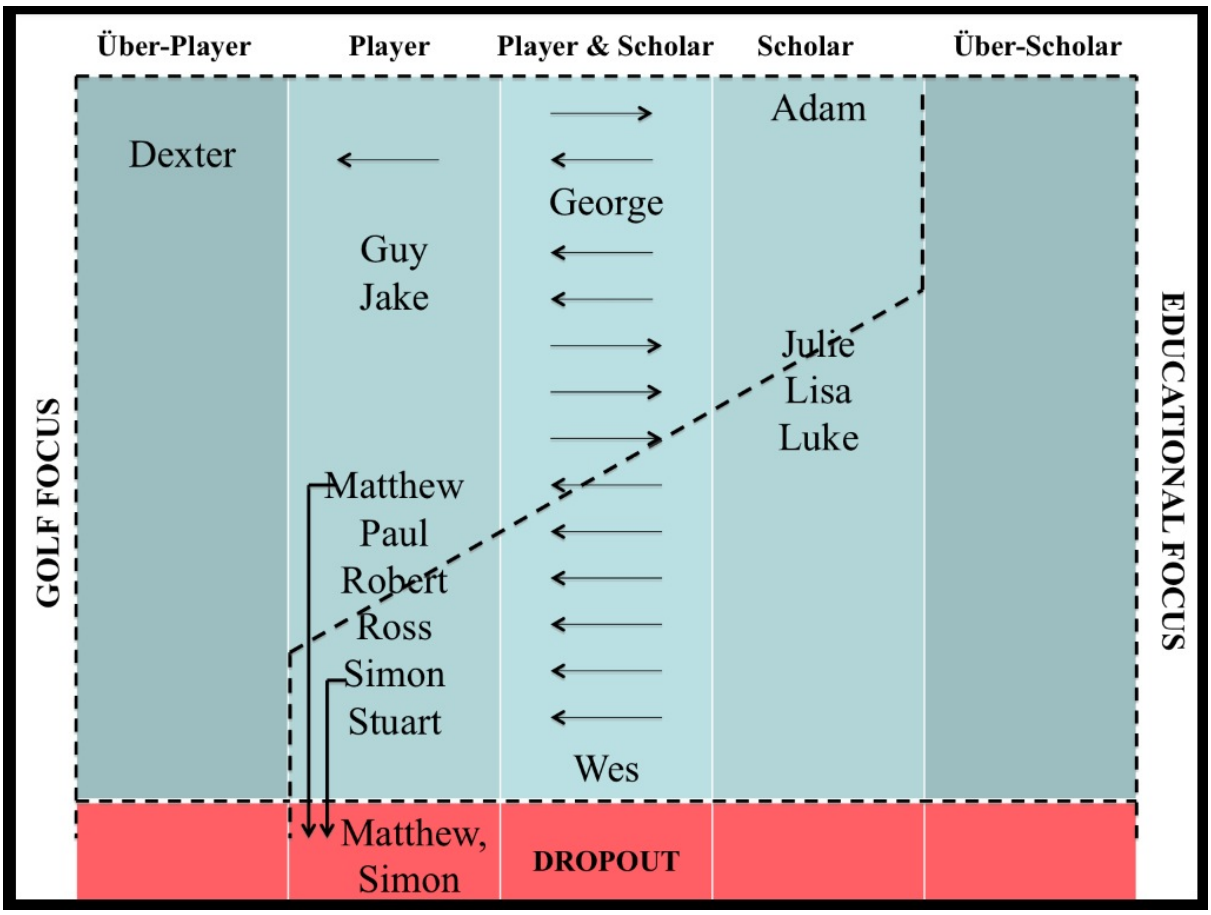
Field note – 20th April 2011

JW "So if most of the golfers wanted to be players at the start, how did this change over time?"

Stephen "Very quickly from the start of the programme the classes always seemed to break into four groups: those that got their work and golf done, those that were focused on golf, those focused on study and those that didn't care about either!"

JW "What kind of percentage realised they wouldn't make it?"
Stephen "It was virtually 85% - 95% and this realisation usually set in quite early on during the first year… a few really pushed themselves to make it as elite professionals"

At the end of the first year of the course, I was able to plot where the apprentice golfers motivation lay in terms of displaying the characteristics of 'Players', 'Scholars' or both:



[Diagram 3 – Conceptual model of engagement: apprentice golfers after year 1]

[Arrow denotes a movement of category of the apprentice golfer from Diagram 2]

The group then began to fracture and the two groups identified developed their own community of practice with associated legitimate peripheral participation and situated learning. Membership of these groups though was in a state of flux as more of the 'Players' began to realise that the cultural capital of education was becoming more and more attractive as the physical capital of being a professional players began to ebb away.

This type of division and demarcation has echoes of the work of Parker in which he looked at football academies. Similarly to this study, Parker (2000b) found that at the start of term the behaviours of the football trainees was 'relatively positive' and part of their overall training at the club, but "as time went on, however, and trainees became increasingly influenced by the subculture expectancies of club life, educational enthusiasm waned" (Parker 2000b; 71). As time went by, and akin to 'Players' and 'Scholars', Parker (2000b) found two groups, 'brainy bastards' and 'thick cunts', were similarly divided on sport and educational lines. 'Thick cunts' did not value the educational element on offer to them, they were disruptive in class and "would have preferred not to continue their education at all. For many, further educational pursuit was seen as simply as a waste of time – time when they could be training, playing, 'learning' more about their chosen profession" (Parker 2000b; 65). I also came across evidence of disruptive behaviour from 'Players' in the classroom:

> Field note - 29 Jan 2010
>
> *At the college today...Stuart's raison d'être seems to be to disrupt and play around; it doesn't seem an ideal set up in the classroom as it's a supervised self-directed session. This means that most are playing games on the computer with headphones on, not much work going on by the look of it and Stuart is lolling on his chair shouting out at others. There are a few though who are doing stuff, maybe got their headphones on to block out the noise? Last time I saw him (Stuart) at golf training he was hitting balls down the corridor behind the bays of the driving range before Billy told him off. Also, in the putting analysis session Stuart was playing the fool and 'showing off'. He appears to be treading a fine line here – before Christmas he was about to be kicked off the course, but to my surprise he is still here at the end of*

January and asking in very hushed tones if he could have a lesson today. I guess if he were kicked off the course it would possibly anger his dad, but would also mean that he would have to do something else – like get a job or do another course…

The majority of the participants in Parker's work saw the education element of their football academy experience as unimportant and a distraction. When one participant, 'Pete', was asked if he saw college as a relevant part of being a football trainee, he replied:

"I don't think it has owt to do wi; it really. It's just a day off training...It's like a day away from't regular routine. It i'nt that strenuous is it really? We have a good laugh in class an' that, we hardly do any work. It's just a day away" (Parker 2000b; 72).

This seemed to also be the attitude of Stuart, although there were a number of others who were doing their work, Luke and Wes included.

Field note - 29th Jan 2010

Luke was initially in the middle ground, both a 'Player' and 'Scholar' like everyone else, he entered AASE to become a touring professional, and followed this path for the first year but ended up a 'Scholar' as he needed to get some qualifications to go and be a personal trainer. He realised his golf playing career was not going to happen.

5.4.3 Trajectories, during year two

Towards the end of the programme, individuals had undergone further changes in trajectory. Some of the 'Players' were not bought into the content or delivery of the golf coaching on offer as such, dropped out of the course. Stuart was a case in point:

Vignette – Stuart

JW "What will happen to him now (as he has dropped out)"

Billy "He will probably have to go back to work in the family business, something he's been trying to avoid I think...I think he just did AASE to buy some time"

JW "He didn't really seem too interested in the coaching when I saw him"

Billy "No, he had a few lessons at the start but in the end just wasn't interested"

Originally a 'Player' Stuart began to drop out of this group too, he didn't want the golf coaching or to take part in the 'golf day' that was the domain of the 'Players'. As such he became estranged from the other apprentice golfers and this resulted in dropout.

The two identified groups of 'Players' and 'Scholars' began to marginalise further and spent less and less time together doing the same things:

Vignette – March 2011 The übers

The two groups, 'Players' and 'Scholars' seem to have become more marginalised; some individuals are now displaying behaviours and characteristics of only one group…

'über Scholars' – Julie, Luke, Adam, David, Nat, John, Guy

Scholar – Lisa, Andy, Robbie,

In the middle, – Wes, George

'über Players' – Hal, Simon, Jake, Matthew, Paul, Jude, Dexter, Ross, Gary, Gordon, Robert

Neither 'Players' or 'Scholars' and therefore dropped out – Stuart

If you are über ('Player' or 'Scholar') you neither want nor need the coaching or the education. At the end of the two years I go along to golf training day, but there are only the 'über Players' there…the 'Scholars' are all busy doing their college work in order to pass….

Field note – 20th April 2011, Stephen

JW "So you have to chase around after the students making sure they finish all their work?"

Stephen "Yep, the college needed the success rates more than some of the kids needed or wanted to pass. But to be brutally honest, I can't disagree with this situation

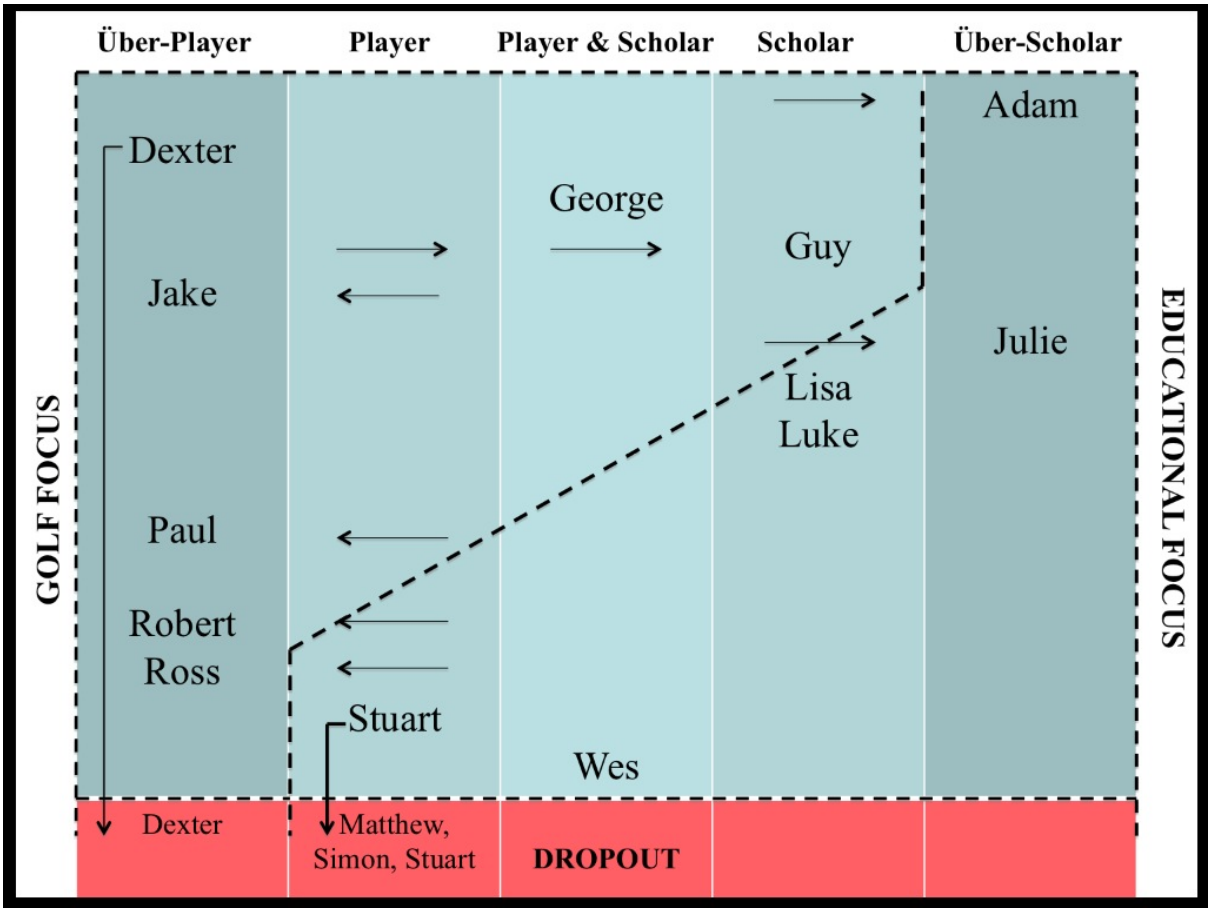
enough. This situation completely undermines the programme, the college, and the kids that did want to pass themselves and ultimately it makes the college look poor. I would have situations where the students who do want to pass themselves would see what's going on with those who clearly don't want to but will be passed no matter what. This is a shocking situation!

JW "I can see how that must be frustrating for you…"

Stephen "The individuals I chase through each year should not pass, why should they? If they choose to mess around and not complete work when required then why should I have to pass them? They should simply be given the opportunity to fail which they are not. During the run in to the end of the second year I basically tell each student what assignments they are missing and they would do them. Normally this was to a poor standard and very rushed. What it is even more worrying is that some students can't even be bothered to take the short cut, so I virtually (at times) end up doing the work for them or accepting work that is of a very low standard. They are also alternative assessment methods like a verbal assessment. Instead of the student having to complete the assignment for a grade, we can question them and if they demonstrate the correct knowledge they get a tick in the box for that assignment. This form of assessment just provides us with an option to get the worst kids through the pass barrier quickly. This entire situation is completely wrong…"

The AASE program was set up assuming that participants would want both elements of the programme; it was devised around a standard student – one who wanted to belong to both groups and get the best of both worlds, use the education opportunities and make the most of

the coaching on offer. One of Parker's (2000b) 'brainy bastards' spent much time playing down his academic achievements, as he feared it might negatively influence his career progression. Interestingly, the apprentice golfers here do not hide their preference; they were openly 'Players' or 'Scholars'. Towards the end of the second year of study, I was able to categorise the apprentice golfers in the following way:



[Diagram 4 – Conceptual model of engagement: apprentice golfers during year 2]

[Arrow denotes a movement of category of the apprentice golfer from Diagram 3]

One or two individuals displayed roughly equal attention to, and interest in, being both a 'Player' and a 'Scholar' but this was the exception rather than the rule. 'Players' could be said to value the physical attraction of sport and performance, chasing the dream and not buying into the idea and value of education, 'Scholars', conversely, saw and valued the

educational opportunities. Zevenbergen et al (2002) found that the culture of golf and golf clubs often demand certain behaviour and ways of thinking of its participants: for Cadet golfers (aged 8-14 years) at Paradise Golf Club to be considered good club members, they needed to display those aspects of golf habitus 'valorised' within the context of the golf club. Cadet golfers who did not display these values were marginalised and eventually excluded. Interestingly here despite the fact that almost all the apprentice golfers fell into the category of 'Player' or 'Scholar', there was no attempt to marginalise or exclude any of them. Indeed, the AASE programme rationale was to facilitate a dual purpose or need: to support athletes with a realistic chance of playing as their main career goal and to also act as the first step for alternative careers if this did not work out (Mid-Town College 2008). In this research, the two identified communities began to appear quite quickly and there was no real attempt by the college to try to keep all apprentice golfers interested in both playing golf and education all the way through the course.

Comparisons can be made here with the work of McGillivray et al (2005) in their study of Scottish professional footballers. McGillivray et al (2005) asserted that the body of the footballer could be described as physical capital and as such a commodity which is his main exchangeable asset, but that there are clear dangers with rejecting education, in favour of investing everything in their physical and bodily assets. In a desire to persevere and extend these assets, 'Players' were prone to "follow practices of abstinence and sacrifice, subordinating deleterious lifestyle behaviours to the imperatives of bodily care" and as such the footballer is "inhabited by the game he inhabits" (McGillivray et al 2005; 107). These 'Players' appeared to be basking in this status and clinging to the dreams of fame and fortune sold to them by the programme.

There is a general perception that sporting success provides a way for working class young people to find sporting fame and fortune, as McGillivray et al (2005; 118) say "the game is essentially in them and has offered them an avenue out of their oppressive circumstances, an opportunity to fashion an autonomous future from a largely dependent past. It is little wonder, then, that the participants appear unwilling to relinquish this opportunity in favour of the relative mundaneness of an alternative employment field". This may not have been the same reality for the apprentice golfers studied here; these apprentice golfers were, in the main, middle class and their attitudes to sport may not have been viewed as a way out of oppressive circumstances, but rather, a route to sporting glory.

Parker (1995) says that the working class footballers in his study were not aligned and 'bought into' education as it conforms to middle class codes and norms. The experiences of McGillivray et al (2005) were slightly different in this regard: despite the working class backgrounds of the professional footballers in their study and their lack of appetite to undertake any further education, the academic backgrounds of the individuals was reasonable and that they had failed to capitalise on their potential, partly due to their low perception of education, which meant their "academic potential is side-lined in favour of immersion in the footballing dream world where the game shapes the attitude, behaviours, and responses of its young recruits to the detriment of formal educational attainment" (McGillivray et al 2005; 113).

The apprentice golfers in this study were from the middle classes (as are most golf participants in England) and had reasonable school results and in some cases, strong academic backgrounds, but still some 'Players' did not want to engage with education and were seemingly dazzled by the promise of sporting fame and fortune. So it seems that

perhaps social class is not necessarily a defining factor when considering how young people react to, and interact with, sport and education. Perhaps ones attitude here is more down to 'personal outlook' than social class?

5.5 Chapter Conclusion

Apprentice golfers enrolled on the AASE programme therefore could be said to have bought into the idea of sport and education and its co-delivery, as this is what the course offered. Having said that, and according to the testimony of Stephen, most apprentice golfers dreamed of making it to professional, playing, ranks. However, as the two-year course proceeded, it appeared that two communities emerged, communities that became increasingly marginalised and isolated from each other. 'Players' valued the physical capital of sport performance and the promise of fame and fortune. 'Scholars' gave up on their playing dreams to concentrate on their education (and the cultural capital therein) in order to help them find the "alternative career routes" (Mid-Town College 2008; 3) that were also a stated outcome of the course.

Interestingly a number of 'Players' (Dexter, Gary, Matthew, Simon and Stuart) dropped out of the course, whereas all of the 'Scholars' graduated. This could be in part due to the quality and provision of the golf coaching on offer which many of the 'Players' found did not meet their wants and needs. This matter will be addressed directly in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 6: GOLF COACHING

6.1 Chapter Introduction

The AASE programme was ultimately a golf performance programme and the golf element, rather than the education element, was the main attraction to young golfers who enrolled on the course. As such, I really wanted to understand the 'coaching offer' on many levels, from the selection of coaches to work on the programme right through to their delivery and the experiences of this delivery from the apprentice golfers' points of view. This area then relates to research question 3:

Research question 3 – What is the narrative of the golf coaching delivered by the programme?

Coach recruitment

- How are the coaches selected by the college?
- What impact does this process have on what is delivered?

The Coaches

- How have the coaches arrived at where they are now; what has been their coaching journey?
- What styles of delivery do they use in their coaching practice?

Participants' view of the coaching

- How do the participants experience the delivery styles of the coaches?
- Does the coaching delivery offer a quality experience for the apprentice golfers?

- Are the individual needs of each person catered for by the coaches? Do the golfers get individual coaching, or is it institutionalised?

6.2 The Golf Coaches

I wanted to learn more about the coaches so that I could further understand the coaching delivery. I therefore arranged to meet Billy on a few occasions and became well acquainted with him and his journey in some detail. I did not spend as much time with Nigel.

Field note - Summer 2009 - Billy

I talk to Billy about my study before the course begins and he seems very open. Billy "I was born in xxxxx, I grew up in the countryside with a loving family, sport has always been a part of my life but only really in school. It was only when I started to play golf did my obsession with sport developed into my whole life. School for me was a means to an end and I only went because I had to; I only did the bare minimum that was required. Some things came easy to me others were hard but I was lazy as a whole. All my friends in school lived a long way from me so I did not get to spend much time with them socially except in school. Looking back school times were fun and I wished I had worked harder so I could have developed more and improved my CV."

"Golf became my life when I was 12. I joined a golf club with the family after hitting a few golf balls left-handed at my friend's house and fancied taking it up. Within months of starting I was hooked and wanted a career in golf as a club professional.

Playing golf opened lots of social doors for me as living in the sticks there weren't a lot of children my age to mix with, there was a great atmosphere at my golf club with some great kids of different ages and abilities; it sparked a competitiveness among us and drove us all on – many of us turned professional."

"I started working straight from school at the local golf club (not where he was a member). I worked for a great guy who taught me a lot about people skills but not anything else as I realise now. He was a very successful coach but I think this was down to his people skills and not his expertise in technical matters. My learning really started when I joined the staff at the xxxxx Golf Club and was told I was expected to come in the top three of the trainee of the year program. Working with a big team with an expectancy placed upon me made me want to work hard and develop. At the end of my training I achieved third place in the trainee of the year and have continued in that vein and never want to stop learning"

6.3 College selection of coaches

Alex recruited the coaches for the programme on behalf of the college in a rather haphazard way. He did this by simply asking around who would be a good coach. This approach exposed the college and the apprentice golfers to an element of 'luck' that could have been more effectively managed. Alex tells me he was not given much help by the EGU/EWGA and had to go on recommendations. Alex says:

Vignette Alex

Alex "We need some kind of coach accreditation so I can tell which coach is good and which coach isn't"

I don't ask Alex if he has a job description and specification to recruit against, but I guess he doesn't – he says that when he recruited coaches for this program initially, he just had to ask around and eventually he found Billy and Nigel both of whom have excellent reputations. Alex tells me that other colleges in the programme have asked him how to recruit the coaches and simply told them to ask around. As it turned out, on the face of it at least, Alex did strike 'lucky' in this respect.

Both Billy and Nigel were PGA Professionals of long-standing, and as Alex said, of good reputation. Billy was a full-time coach, while Nigel split his time between coaching and retail. Other coaching staff were deployed by the college during the year. Andrew was a bio-mechanist but also a PGA Professional and had an excellent reputation as a leader in this field in golf. Kyle was a well known 'mind coach' who also has a strong reputation. At the end of the first year of the study, Alex emailed me his thoughts on the coaching staff and their deployment:

Field note – May 2010, E-mail from Alex

"Andrew will be offered more time in the next academic year (more efficient spending of the money we previously spent on Kyle)."

"I will be giving myself some hours at Bridge [Golf Club] with each group (for the first time) because I realise that now the academy is bigger, it has been more difficult for me to develop relationships with all of the apprentices while only seeing them at the college. I also feel I am suitably skilled and knowledgeable to provide the psych and nutritional interventions when required – I'll obviously get feedback after doing it for a year to gauge whether it is working but I wouldn't put myself in the position if I didn't think it was a good way to deal with the issues. I think my presence at Bridge might also help to smooth over a few issues with the club that have emerged this year, and also allow me to engage more with the coaches and other experts involved."

"I've always tried to have two different styles of coach and I am really happy with Billy and Nigel. We'll definitely look which coach works with who in the future. If you are aware of any tests or questionnaires we could use, I'd love to see them. I just worry that a lot of the less experienced golfers don't know what they want in a coach, so it might not be straight forward. Like you say, ideally the coach will adjust the way they work to cater for individual needs. Do you think this is happening? As I haven't been there a lot, my impression was that the coaches bounce ideas off each other and the coach to golfer allocation isn't completely rigid. Both Billy and Nigel have always struck me as being very open-minded."

"I would quite like the coaches to see more of the guys on the (golf) course. I've always struggled to work out how to factor it in, as the time per student is pretty small. Maybe I need to put something in for one or two of the Wednesday competitions when we get closer to the season?"

"In terms of the course, one of the things which is quite good about Bridge as a course is the variety of types of golf hole. Some are very parkland like (some very tight, course management weighted holes, and some long, open holes) and the new holes are very linksy, so it does give them a different type of golf. In the past we have paid for them to play a range of courses in the region during their Wednesday competitions, but they have other chances to play different courses. The feedback from the students is that if they don't have something to play for on the Wednesday (qualifying for the team or representing the team) they think it's a bit of a waste of time playing in the winter. I think I'm going to put on some sessions with Andrew and/or Mark on these 'free' Wednesdays to make the time better spent."

"Going to xxxxx (national golf centre) was the best thing I've ever done for the academy. I wouldn't want to go at the same time as another group; because we had almost exclusive use of the academy and needed it with the number we took. Maybe 'overlapping' with a national squad would be a possibility, so we could play them at the end of our week. I did like the stroke play competition at the end of the week though, because it fitted with the idea of having a week as a Tour Pro."

Alex seemed amenable to the idea of looking at matching players with coaches. This interaction between the two individuals, golfer and coach, was something which has been overlooked with the recent trend of a focus on the 'science' of coaching rather than the 'art' of coaching (Potrac and Jones 1999). In golf terms this also manifests itself as an over-emphasis on 'what' to coach, not 'how' to coach it.

6.4 Coaching in action

6.4.1 Who coaches whom?

Following the Trials Day and at the first session of golf training, the coaches divided the apprentice golfers into the two groups they would coach; another 'critical episode' for the golfers. This seemed to be done fairly randomly apart from the individuals whom the two coaches already taught outside of AASE. Billy told me that he had quite a few apprentice golfers in the last few in the last couple of years that he taught already, and when they joined the programme he carried on teaching them on college days. Billy told me that this was mainly because he was teaching the local County junior squads up until recently and the golfers fed into him from there and one of the natural outlets was for them to undertake AASE. He also put many of them forward to AASE. So there was no matching of coaches to players, perhaps the coaches would match their style of delivery to suit each individual player and in so doing attend to the interpersonal nature of coaching that Potrac and Purdy (2004) say is critical to successful coaching.

There did seem to be a heavy reliance on the coach and their position, once acquired, was a very influential one. They also stood to gain in so many other ways, such as picking up extra business from the apprentice golfers. This must have irritated and alienated the home coaches; not only did they have 'their' players coached by someone else, possibly undoing the work they are undertaking, but also the player was very likely to leave and work with the AASE coach full time. This was definitely a 'talent system' factor that is prevalent in golf. Billy did tell me that although all this happened, many of the young people from his county went on to do AASE at other colleges apart from Mid-Town College. Billy also told me that Nigel behaved in a similar way in a neighbouring county where the apprentice golfers were

drawn to AASE by Nigel; the coaches then saw their own players at the Trials Day, and these young golfers, seemed to be offered places.

Billy says that he now teaches more individuals who want to be full time playing professionals, and PGA Professionals who want to be playing professionals – this is the main area of his business, so the AASE cohort and those like them were a significant source of income and his specialty. It is interesting that the coaches acknowledged their own style and preference here, perhaps, given Billy's outlook, he would have been better coaching the 'Players'?

The process for deciding who coached whom (at the start of the year) was based on who they had already coached as a start-point, the rest was decided by Billy. Nigel called Billy "the secretary" as he did the organisation of the golf sessions; Billy therefore allocated Paul, as he was in a national squad (Wales), and also a couple of the others who he considered to be "good" to be coached by him. At no point during these decisions did Billy suggest that the choice of who coaches whom was based on the participants' needs, simply on whom he wanted and whom he could allocate to Nigel. This was not the player-centred approach which Douglas and Carless (2008) describe. Later Nigel complained that Billy "got all the good players".

Usually the athlete has some element of power in the coach-athlete relationship, especially when the athlete is the one who hires the coach. However that was not the case in this research; golfers were stuck with the two coaches provided and did not get a say in which coach was allocated to them. However, they could still exert some degree of power by choosing not to attend their session, misbehaving, and/or generally being a disruptive force,

exerting their ‘special-ness’. The college and the coaches are once again at the whim of the apprentice golfers, as they need to retain them all, despite their behaviour, in order to secure the funding.

6.4.2 Random (mis)matching

It was evident that the coaches made limited attempts to understand the golfers’ wants and needs. Each coach delivered in their own style and preferred method. Additionally their choice of apprentice golfer was centred on the coaches’ desires and not based on the golfers’ individual requirements. As such the structure of the ‘talent system’ and the method of delivery of coaching overpowered the individual apprentice golfer’s input to make any decisions or preferences regarding how and by whom they would have preferred to be coached.

However, the journey of the aspiring golfer who aims to play for a living can be likened to a war of attrition; it is not always the most ‘talented’ golfers who become playing professionals. More often it is those with the drive and commitment who have the appetite and stamina to progress and succeed professionally. Was there an argument then that the potential mis-matching of coaches and apprentice golfers might actually have benefited the golfers and have been in a counter-intuitive way, ‘lucky’? This allocation of coach to apprentice golfer was not something the golfer had much control over, and as such might have been viewed by them as unpalatable due to its uncontrollable nature, as Tranckle and Cushion (2006) describe, but if they had ‘good luck*’* and are allocated the right coach this could have been a positive ‘critical episode’.

Vignette - Wes and Dexter

Wes tells me that his home coach teaches the "old-fashioned way" and it's all about rhythm and timing, whereas he is taught by Billy at AASE and it's all about "modern techniques" - hitting it hard and being an athlete. Wes tells me he doesn't take what his various coaches tell him at face value; he thinks about what they have said and decides what he likes and what he might ignore. He also has a County coach who has been advising on course management. So, this mixing up of delivery styles seems to be working for Wes; he positively enjoys it. He does have the benefit of a father who was a PGA Professional and therefore has some coaching knowledge. He uses his Dad as a sounding board when needed; this is not a resource many young golfers can tap into.

Dexter on the other hand has dropped out, mainly because the style and in fact the technique he was being force-fed was not to his liking. He tells me that he would make up excuses for not going to lessons and would avoid them at all costs. This situation was made far worse by the 'Brazilgate' (detailed later).

Perhaps those who are ultimately successful need to go through experiences that introduce them to new ways of thinking and learning? Perhaps this gives them more opportunity to improve rather than to remain in their comfort zone, not challenged too much? Maybe this was what was happening to Paul who was bored with practice; he was not challenged, worked with the same coach for a few years, simply repeating his existing practices. Some of the other students were newer to the game, like 'sponges' soaking up all of the available details and knowledge; they actively sought new experiences and information. Golfer's who

achieve ‘tour status’ need to be more self-reliant and mature in their thinking. Perhaps exposing apprentice golfers to lots of different ways of learning is a positive factor and one that may be beneficial later in their career. The individuals who make it are strong and resilient and will find their way.

6.4.3 AASE and home coaches

Home coaches within this research were defined as coaches who work with the apprentice golfers one-to-one and away from AASE. They were often the coach at a golfers’ home club and someone with whom the golfer had a relationship with before they entered the programme. These home coaches are often one of the main reasons why these golfers have progressed successfully to date. They were paid for by the golfer, or in this case, probably by the golfers’ parents, and therefore would only be retained if progress was being made and the golfer was satisfied. As such the relationship an apprentice golfer has with the home coach was very different from that with the AASE coach. This however, is complicated by the fact that, for certain individuals, the home coach and AASE coach was the same person.

> Field note - 11 Dec 2009
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> *Stuart is now on his last warning and has only had two lessons since the start of the programme – he has coaching elsewhere but is not really interested. He’s hitting balls down the range walkway. Interestingly, he is the only one in the group who has been scouted by the local England selector. Billy says he has sent the EGU/EWGA ‘coach-to-coach’ forms (to aid communication between the two) to Stuart’s coach but has had nothing back – in fact he has had nothing from any of the home coaches.*

During the entire two years following this cohort, I never heard of a form being returned and used, nor of any communication of any sort between home coach and AASE coach. This of course puts the pupil in a potentially difficult situation, being coached by multiple individuals all with different ideas regarding how best to develop the golfer.

Field note - 16th June 2010

Dexter says that he has had the same coach since early in his development. He first had lessons with the PGA Professional at his home club but soon moved to the coach he is now with. When he started AASE he didn't want the coaching on offer – the coaches there didn't really make any attempt to communicate with the home coach.

As for the home coach (Darren) he told Dexter 'Don't talk to them, nod but just keep working on what we are doing'. The home coach has told Dexter not to talk to anyone about his swing or what he is working on. He says that anything like this will only distract him from what he's doing – this seems like a fair point.

JW "How did you deal with the lesson scenario at AASE then?"

Dexter "I used to make things up like, like forgetting what time his lesson would be and so I would turn up at the wrong time, that kind of thing really"

I wonder what sort of influence the home coach had over this? He clearly wants to keep hold of Dexter. I ask him about his home coach and he says that he is more of a mentor:

Dexter "We play a few holes and he gives me half an hour and in that time he works wonders for me; he is more of a mate really, we text each other, he is like a mentor really. He has played on tour and so knows what it's all about"

Dexter reports that the AASE coaches never saw him play on the course,

Dexter "It's all very well working on the range every week, but I don't play at the range, those coaches never saw me on the course, but with Darren we play together and I learn from him as well as him seeing me play".

JW "Are there two different types of people here then, one that wants the golf coaching and see it as a real benefit and then some like you and Stuart who don't want it?"

Dexter "Yeah, there are a few like me in that they don't want the coaching and would do anything to avoid it"

This isn't helped in Dexter's case by the 'Brazilgate' which causes further problems and ultimately leads to Dexter dropping out of the program altogether.

So are there two strands here, those who want coaching and those who do not?....interesting...some take all the advice on offer on-board, whereas others have home coaches who they trust and actually don't want any instruction...

Field note - Summer 2010, Wes

I ask about his home coach 'Geoff'. He used to work at xxx Golf Club and is a mate of his Dad from his time as a pro. Geoff doesn't work locally any more, he has just started a job in xxx but still lives nearby and plays with Wes and his dad. He tells me that before AASE he had a monthly lesson with Geoff but since AASE started this is now just as and when he needs help understanding or making something work – maybe this is like a mentor role?

Wes was allocated to be coached by Nigel when the AASE programme started, for no reason in particular. He didn't know either of the coaches. However, he says there has been no communication at all between his two coaches Geoff and Nigel – none:

Wes "I have to decide what's best for my own golf"

JW "That could be difficult…"

Wes smiles and says that his dad is important here as he can always help and he takes an active interest in what Wes is being coached.

Wes "Dad says that there are two ways to coach – the classical way where you have control over the ball and plot your way around but don't hit it far, and the modern way where you smash the ball and then have to deal with the trouble that may come. Geoff coaches the classical way and Nigel at AASE helps with the power game"

JW "How is this working?" I ask,

Wes "Well, I have started to hit it much further since I went to AASE, although I may have done this a bit myself as I am getting bigger and stronger"

Wes says that if he then loses his rhythm he will go to Geoff to work on that. He says that Geoff works on a Jack Nicklaus approach while Nigel works on the Tiger model – this must result in confusion, surely?

To add to the confusion, Wes has just been selected for his County squad and is coached by someone else there - Graham. Interestingly though, Graham has not really 'coached' the team, what he does is see the squad in play and then makes notes and then runs a session on an area that he thinks they all need to improve, usually a game management issue.

Interestingly, Graham does not pick the team instead this is done by a volunteer. This seems very illogical, but is typical of the way County golf is organised, an unpaid unqualified amateur making selection decisions rather than the PGA Professional coach.

Nigel has seen Wes on the course twice and Wes says this was useful, but with Geoff this is not what they do, they play and go from there – again like a mentor. The most important factor here is his dads's role – he acts as the filter for Wes; or a third voice whichever way you look at it. This works well at the moment and is great for him but I wonder how this would work for someone who does not have a parent who used to be a professional coach?

The more successful the player, the more coaches they are likely to work with within the 'talent system'; a national player may have a home coach, an AASE coach, a regional coach and national coaches (short game, long game, bio-mechanist, psychologist). If these coaches had taken a person-centred approach, these potential conflicts could have been reduced. However, due to the culturally technical nature of golf coaching delivery, coaches often attempt to imprint their own technical model or methods on players. This is usually a complicating factor for the players at the centre; indeed Branton (2013) found evidence that this multiple deployment of coaches had a detrimental effect on golf performance.

6.4.4 Individual or institutionalised coaching?

The coaching delivery seen within this study was quite one dimensional and not enough time or care was taken to satisfy the needs of all the individuals. More flexibility and understanding might have been beneficial. Coaching delivery observed could be characterised thus:

- Coaches treated the whole group as a homogeneous body
- No differences of delivery based on membership of different domains

- The differing needs of 'Players' and 'Scholars' were not addressed resulting in dissatisfaction for both groups
- 'Players' – some dropped out of the programme as the coaching was not meeting their needs
- 'Scholars' – most stopped attending golf sessions to concentrate on their studies
- Coaching was not tailored to each individual and therefore was usually not effective
- Neither group catered for effectively

Most of the factors above could be said to equate to an approach that was coach-centred: individuals were not treated as such and their personal wants and needs were not attended to in an effective way. EGU/EWGA (2009) stated in their course promotion and marketing that AASE was player-centred, but in fact this was not the case. Rather, the existing coaches and their methods were fixed and rigid and the golfers were expected to adapt to them; the coaching delivery was actually coach-centred. In this way the 'talent system', of which AASE was a part, was failing the apprentice golfers, but it was also failing golf in general and the performance of England as a golfing nation. EGU/EWGA (2009) had identified that player-centred coaching was important, but the delivery of the programme was not set up that way and coaching at this college in this study was system-centred in that it attended to the individuals who were delivering, not those being delivered to. The experience of the golfers, and therefore the strength of the 'talent system', was therefore compromised because individuals were not able to reach their potential. This situation was chronic in its nature as coaching delivery did not change over the two-year period and was a 'critical episode' for the apprentice golfers.

Vignette Wes

Wes echoes the comments of Dexter – completely unsolicited – and says that the AASE coaches seem to coach to a model as all the students are swinging the same.

Wes "It's spooky, when I'm at the range [in the AASE session], I look down the range and see all the golfers swinging and THEY ALL LOOK THE SAME!!"

JW "How so?"

Wes "Shortened swings and swinging from the inside"

At this point we both look up and cast our eyes down the range…and he's right, they do all look the same…

JW "Ah…Right… ok!"

This observation from Wes seems to indicate that coaching was being delivered in somewhat the same fashion for many of the apprentice golfers and according to Cassidy et al (2006) this may be the result of a lack of professional development on the part of the coaches. This lack of understanding regarding athlete learning, and the complex and dynamic environment of coaching often lead to what Cassidy et al (2006) describes a 'mindless coaching'. Wes also said that he had a lesson from Billy on some weeks because more of Nigel pupils were in attendance, so one or two of Nigel's players had their lesson with Billy. Wes actually said he enjoyed it and that Billy seemed to know more than Nigel who often referred to Billy to

confirm and verify information. By this token, Wes would have liked to be coached by Billy as his AASE coach, but Nigel was his coach. There was no review of who coached whom during the two years; the allocation of apprentice golfers was fixed at the outset.

Vignette Guy

Looking back, Guy says that Billy and Nigel had 'disagreements' over what to instruct in golf; Guy was suffering with his putting during AASE and after some advice from Billy that was not working, Nigel gave some advice which really did help a lot. His putting was "too technical" and Nigel made it simple and concentrated on feel.

Within the context of golf coaching, parallels can be drawn here with the work of Zevenbergen et al (2002). In this research all golf cadets (aged 8-14 years) were compelled to take part in a weekly one-hour group golf lesson with a professional golfer. Ken, the golf professional, was a figure of authority whose knowledge was not to be questioned. The lessons were undertaken in a technical, non-thinking way and knowledge was handed down from the coach in such a way that "Cadets came to construct golf as a form of skilled knowledge that was transmitted from one who knew to those who didn't know" (Zevenbergen 2002; 11). Coaching practice here was simply the passing on of a technical body of information that Potrac et al (2002) describe and Jones (2000) warn against. Within AASE, there seemed to be a single way to play golf; Billy felt that his technical knowledge and coaching were sacrosanct and not to be questioned. Apprentice golfers had to conform to his rules and regulations for him to afford them his wisdom. The structure of the programme and the institutionalised offer that it encompassed was seen as preeminent. There was no

thought of a guided discovery approach with any of these golf apprentices, their needs were not taken into account at all and they were not tested to find out more or asked what kind of coaching they might find most useful. Perhaps if the coaches had developed a reflective mindset then they might have realised what was happening. This type of reflective practice is something that Cassidy et al (2006) say a modern coach should be able to achieve and in so doing it mitigates against the 'mindless' teaching that Gilbert and Trudel (2006) shun.

Apprentice golfers had little opportunity to voice their requirements from the golf coaching; instead they received what Billy deemed to be what they needed. In this circumstance it was imperative that coaching was undertaken in a thoughtful way so as to protect the best interests of the apprentice golfer. The golf coach should have been the 'more capable other', guiding these young golfers in developing their potential (Potrac and Cassidy 2006).

6.4.4.1 Brazilgate

An example of the coaching delivery and how the apprentice golfers experienced it, is given here, focusing on Dexter.

> Field note - spring 2010
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> *It's a putting master class at golf training this week. The group is split for the day into 3 groups. There will be: video analysis, comments on technique, work on these areas, drills including the 'round the clock' drill. These sessions are based on "science" according to Billy who says that putting technique should be about: wide stance,*

shoulders very hunched, D5 vertebrate flat, eye line inside the ball - but surely this is teaching to a model?

Isn't it about getting the ball in the hole? Later I do a little probing and the coaches get a bit defensive and ask me about my own putting beliefs. I say I like to just feel free in the putting stroke and that I try and minimise any thoughts and just let it happen. Billy and Nigel laugh and clearly think this is very funny.

Billy is explaining part of the technique when Stuart shouts out "That's not what you told me a year ago, no wonder I've been putting shit!"

"Things move on" says Billy, "its science and I can prove it, there's lots of research to back up this stuff"

Stuart (who, at one time, was being coaching privately by Billy) has made a good point, but is also acting as a disruptive force in the room, distracting others and drawing them into trouble. Maybe he is like this because he doesn't want to listen to Billy's latest version of how he should putt.

All the golfers start getting into the position described by Billy. This 'position' looks very like the putting position and technique of Padraig Harrington, an Irish elite golfer; bending way over with the spine, keeping the putter head relatively straight on the way back and through…. Harrington won the Open Championship in 2007 and in 2008 when he also won another of the four golf 'majors', the US PGA Championship.

Is this model based on him? Why isn't the putting master class also based on Tiger Woods (winner of 14 'majors', two of which also occurred in 2007 and 2008)? Wood's technique for putting is at the opposite of end of the scale from Harrington; he stands tall, lets the putter face rotate 'open' and on way back and 'closes' on the way through…Woods is widely regarded as one of the best putters the game of golf has ever seen. These two individuals make a case for finding a method that suits them as individuals, clearly both have had success.

There is something very wrong here, this is terrible coaching, making all these individuals conform to a model which may not suit them. It takes no account of:

- *Current putting technique*
- *Current level of performance – what if they are already a great putter?*
- *Equipment the golfer is using, its shaft length, weight, head type - different styles of putter are set up for different techniques, the 'Harrington method' would be better suited to a face-balanced putter, the 'Woods method' by a toe-balanced putter*

The coaching experienced by Dexter outlined above was far from ideal. There was no account taken of his individual needs and was another episode of what could be described as coach-centred delivery. There was a lack of understanding of these golfers and delivery seemed to be focussed on the 'science' of coaching (Potrac and Jones 1999), perhaps the 'what' of coaching, rather than the social nature of coaching, the 'how'. This experience may not have been the only factor that led to Dexter's dropout, but it was a factor:

Vignette 16th June 2010

Dexter has now dropped out of the AASE programme. I go and meet him at his home golf club for a chat and we get talking about the putting session. As it turns out, just after the master-class, Dexter was about to leave the country for Brazil to play in the Faldo series. Just making the finals in Brazil was quite an achievement in itself, so Dexter did extremely well.

Due to the proximity of the Brazilian event, the biggest thing that Dexter will have ever played in, he felt like he didn't want to mess around with his putting technique much, especially this had been going really well; he had made it to Brazil after all.

He said this to the coaches, but they still made him go through the putting day and got him into different set-up and changed his ball position.

What was most disturbing was that they were teaching everybody the very same technique – this cannot be right. This is coach-centred delivery of the worst kind. Each one of these apprentice golfers has different bodies, tall, short, average height, as well as differing limb lengths, likes, dislikes, skills and qualities. Teaching them all to putt the exact same way seems like the very worst thing to do. This is especially true for Dexter who didn't want to change his technique as he was about to play in the biggest tournament of his life.

As such Dexter was clearly finding the coaching a waste of time. He didn't want the regular coaching and wanted to stay with his home coach and then the coaches

wanted to change something as personal as his putting technique on the eve of the biggest day of his golfing life, factors which contributed to his dropout from the course.

Athletes will not always buy into the coaches' goals or plans and there is also the possibility that individual goals within a team context will conflict. If goals are to be set, the athlete needs to be as involved as possible and not just accept the goals laid down by the coach. If possible the goals need to be set by the athlete and the coach should guide the individual through this process. In golf this is not generally a problem as it's seldom played in a team format. However, in the environment described in this study, the coaches seem more concerned with finding a talent and some participants reaching a high standard, than in the welfare of the individual members of the group.

Dexter goes on to say that he is in contact with a few of the lads from AASE still as they meet up at Opens and events and that they report that everybody is being coached the same swing – first years, second years; they feel they are being taught to a model. Clearly it's difficult for existing young AASE golfers to say this to me and the advantage of speaking to Dexter is that he has already left the course; he may of course just be blaming the coaches for his dropout.

Field note - Feb 2011

I visit the range for a Friday session. Alex is floating around too – he seems to be doing less and less. Last week he went out and played golf with the students and

joined in the practice. He takes Billy aside and tells him about a student who doesn't want the coaching anymore:

Alex "Hasn't been enjoying the coaching, he's been getting confused with what you have been teaching him, he said he went out and played the other day and had a clear mind and enjoyed his golf for the first time in ages, he also said that he was looking up and down the range and thought that all the people you were teaching looked like they had the same swings"

Billy seems non-plussed and doesn't say anything, just gives Alex an 'old- fashioned look', surely Alex will follow this up and have a debrief with Billy about this?

This was interesting as Billy has been teaching putting so they all looked the same, to the "one best, scientific way, this is science" Does this match with treating an individual as an individual with specific needs and requirements and motivations? All teachers/coaches will have differing opinions of what they like to see but this must surely be tempered by what the individual wants and needs – it's not a factory form which everyone needs to come out looking the same....some of the best golfers in the world, Colin Montgomerie and Jim Furyk, do not fit the a model but are incredibly successful, consistent and are multi-millionaires.

Billy had previously reported that:

"We give them [the apprentice golfers] all this fantastic support, but they don't realise what they've got, they don't take advantage of all they get...sometimes by the end of the course or after they have finished, they realise".

My question is: if the students are not ready to accept what's on offer, maybe they are too immature and maybe the delivery of what's being offered is too complex and high level - is it appropriate? AASE should be built around making these individuals as good as they can be now and making sure they stay in the game to continue their development and/or fulfil their potential.

Apprentice golfers could have been allocated to Billy or Nigel according to who suited each of them better. However, this approach was not adopted and in some cases led to dissatisfaction. Initially, Dexter had been allocated Nigel, which he was fairly satisfied with as Billy was "way too technical" for him to deal with – perhaps 'luck' was a factor here, he could just have easily been assigned to Billy and have been stuck with him. This was another example of how the coaching offer was institutionalised; Wes was not offered individual coaching for his putting, but was offered a single model that was forced upon all apprentice golfers. This was in stark contrast to the advice of Armour and Jones (2000) who suggest that putting the person before the body is the most appropriate approach in order to realise an athlete's full potential.

Perhaps as a result of all of some of these factors, Dexter dropped out. When I asked him if there were any other factors as well as the coaching issues, Dexter said that travel to get to college was just too difficult and took too long. He is now a full-time golfer and he just practises and plays.

Field note – 16th June 2010

Dexter eventually finished 3rd in his age group at the Faldo series finals in Brazil... and he hadn't changed his putting technique....

6.4.4.2 'I don't want the coaching'

Even at the start of AASE, there were certain golfers who did not want to access the coaching on offer. According to Billy this was because they had a strong bond with the home coach and they did not want any other information, potentially conflicting information, from somebody else. As field work continued, it became apparent that there were other apprentice golfers who actively did not want their coaching sessions with Billy and Nigel and so avoided lessons at all costs. This lack of engagement even for 'Players', the peripheral participation that Lave and Wenger (2006) describe, led to dropout for certain individuals. Lave and Wenger (2006) often described peripheral participation in terms of newcomers to a community becoming more experienced and transitioning to 'old-timers': here the process seemed to be the other way around, apprentice golfers were somewhat bought into the coaching on offer in AASE, but over time 'Players' found that their needs were not being met and so dropped out of the course, whereas 'Scholars' dropped out of coaching to concentrate on their studies.

Field note - 10 Dec 2009

I'm at the college and I manage to have a chat with Stuart, he says, "I did the course because there was nothing better to do, I thought it seemed like a good idea, I could do my golf and go to college too."

JW "So how's it working out?"

Stuart "It's not really, I don't like the coaching, I try and avoid it"

JW "I thought Billy was your coach?"

Stuart "He was, but I don't like his methods, I changed to someone else a while ago"

JW "Ah, OK, does Billy not talk to the new coach?"

Stuart "He doesn't, no...so I just avoid him [Billy] ... the coaching day is just a waste of time really"

It turns out that Stuart has a long list of ex-coaches, including a national coach who was based around 100 miles away. This might explain the selector being aware of him.

JW "Is your coach different to Billy then?"

Stuart "Totally, way different. Billy is really technical and it does my head in, he keeps trying to get me to have a lesson, and I have to be polite and just say, no thanks, but it's difficult. I have to be at golf training from 10 'til 4 minimum and it's a long day without anything to do, so I just try and play a few holes but it's a waste of the day really"

Stuart says he is considering dropping out and pursuing his golf career (playing) on his own, as he can be more productive with his time, I'm left wondering if he will make it to year two and if and how the college will persuade him to stay, or not.

Vignette – Stuart

As time goes on, Stuart doesn't show up for the golf sessions. He appears to be totally disinterested in all elements of the course; he does not want the coaching and he is not really motivated to do the academic work either.

During year two, Stuart drops out.

When I speak to Billy after this, he tells me that AASE was just a stop gap for Stuart and that he will end up in the family business and that this course just gives him a bit of a buffer before he has to join the business. This seems like a shame as Stuart is the only one of the entire group that appears to have been scouted by a national selector.

When the selector talked to Billy and Nigel I wonder what they must have said as they rarely see him and when they do he is disruptive.

When speaking to Stephen about this, he is damning of the national selection process:

"The selector came to talk to the coaches, but he was only interested in Stuart, and he is the worst player here! They are all more dedicated than him, he is lazy and does not deserve to be selected for anything!"

I wonder if the coaches mentioned anyone else to the selector.

There has to be something amiss here. Stuart does not want to engage with the education part of the course, he doesn't want extra golf lessons with this home coach and 'does everything to avoid them'. And then to crown it all, and even though this is an EGU/EWGA designed and managed course, a selector turned up and the only apprentice golfer he has heard of or wants to talk about is Stuart....Wow, could things be run any worse than this? Why has Stuart not been asked to leave? He is clearly poisoning the whole group in the golf setting with poor, disruptive and dangerous behaviour and showing no signs of determination and ambition to play golf for a living...this situation could not be worse.

However, there were individuals for whom this model-based coaching was working:

Field note - 11 Dec 2009, Robert

Robert is having his lesson with Billy. They are getting along very well and Billy is calling Robert 'the tree' and also, 'the model' – I think that these are compliments.

Coach and player look to be getting on well; they even have a big hug at the end of the lesson.

Robert looks like he is really enjoying the lesson, but when it comes to his paperwork, he seems a little confused as to what to write and where, Billy rolls his eyes jokingly, but tries to help him; they seem to have a good working relationship.

Field note - Oct 2010

I am at the golf club for the first time in the second academic year. I have not seen much of Robert, so I am happy to see him in action today. Billy starts the session, they seem to be getting on very well.

JW "Is Robert still 'the model' then?"

Billy "Well, he's OK, actually, he's lost a bit of distance"
We all troop out of the range so Robert can hit a couple of balls and Billy can video him. Billy videos from two angles, then we go in to look at the evidence.

"You're getting too wide on the way down" says Billy.

The lesson proceeds…

Billy summons over the Andrew the bio-mechanist and they chat, Andrew then does some work with Robert using 'spikey balls'.

It would seem to make sense that if the coaches were delivering a technical model, rather than individualised coaching then there would be apprentice golfers, like Robert, for whom this model was appropriate. This model could be thought of as an institutionalised coaching offer, one which imprinted the power and structure of the 'talent system' and did not allow for any choice for the apprentice golfers; the only way the apprentice golfers could have any form of control was to rebel against what they had been given and refuse the coaching offer. The coaches worked towards making all the golfers fit their model. This was not a conscious effort of the programme, but a function of the coaching styles of the coaches the college employed. The coaching appeared to be coach/model-led and egotistical (rather than altruistic with the participants' wants and needs at the centre) and was not judged by the apprentice golfers to be especially positive. This was just the type of two-dimensional coaching delivery that Jones (2000) warns against. Of course the coaches had to deliver the coaching product, even if the apprentice golfers did not appear to want what was on offer. This was a significant problem for Dexter, who dropped out because the coaching did not meet his wants and needs. This is perhaps understating the situation; not only did it not suit his needs, he felt that it was actually making him significantly worse. This was not really identified by the college, as they did not seek to understand why he dropped out. It could be said then that Dexter, having had his personal agency regarding the golf coaching removed, took the only course of action open to him in these circumstances and dropped out.

The coaches did not appear to talk to or try to understand the players. After the trial they jumped headlong into technical delivery. Often dysfunctional coaching relationships are due to poor communication and bad interpersonal relations (Toner et al 2012) and this appears to be the case with many of the apprentice golfers including Stuart and Dexter. This was not the case with Robert, but he was conforming to the coaching model. The coaches and apprentice

golfers always ate lunch separately on coaching days and perhaps this reflected poor relationships. As Matthews et al (2013; 79) say in "acknowledging and embracing the importance of personal histories and biographies (including their own), coaches can understand athletes better, and interact with them more effectively", that is, considering the whole person and embracing a holistic approach to coaching. A better understanding of the learning and developmental needs of these apprentice golfers would have been critical to sustained involvement.

Another significant factor was that lack of cohesion between AASE coaching and home coaching. Not only did it not join up, but also it was at odds with, and sometimes even contradictory to, the advice of the home coach. This poor coaching practice may well have hindered the development of these apprentice golfers and in the worst-case scenario, may have caused them to deteriorate and drop out altogether.

6.5 Chapter Conclusion

The coaching offer within AASE, as part of the structure of the 'talent system' can be seen as a 'critical episode' as it had such a profound effect on future performance, participation or drop out and therefore life path. Within the coaching offer at the college, the moment when players were allocated to one or the other coach was a key 'critical episode': will the allocated coach suit you and your needs, will their delivery style happen to suit you or not? If it did not suit you, then it appeared that one might become confused and probably drop out of the coaching element of the course or possibly the whole programme entirely. This problem was especially important for the 'Players' as the playing element to them was most important.

The college, through Alex, did not try and match apprentice golfer to the coach and the coaches, for their part, seemed to deliver in the same style, manner, and with the same content, to whoever was in front of them. In this way the group was treated as homogeneous, in which individuality was not catered for. It could be depicted as 'factory farming' for apprentice golfers, if it did not suit the odd player here or there, or event the vast majority, well that was just 'hard luck'; it was an institutionalised coaching context. The 'talent system' has huge power through its structure whilst individual golfers have very little opportunity to exert their own influence apart from the choice to refuse the coaching offer and/or drop out of the programme and therefore out of the system. As time went by many of the 'Players' did not want the coaching at all, and the 'Scholars' realised they would not succeed in playing professionally and therefore valued the education, playing golf being a bonus. The whole reason for this programme and intervention, was to develop players on their journey to become successful international players, was therefore almost entirely lost.

The course leader and coaches did not seem to recognise this at all; it is perfectly illustrated by a quote from Alex:

> *"Coaching and the coaches will give you everything you need – why don't they get this and take advantage, I don't understand it."*

Billy was equally baffled saying:

> *"It's based [his delivery] on science and you can't argue with that."*

Billy's approach was to teach all of the apprentice golfers in the same way. This was identified by the apprentice golfers themselves and led them to question the coaching delivery and its value. They did not like the institutionalised approach taken by the coaches and could not understand how and why they should all be given the same techniques. In essence, the coaching on offer here was coach-centred and egotistical and not participant-centred and more altruistic style that EGU/EWGA (2009) suggested. Taking a little time to understand these golfers from a holistic point of view, taking account of the person, as Jowett and Cockerill (2003) describe, could have resulted in the coaches assisting the work of the home coach, setting up skills challenges and playing opportunities and in this way involving the apprentice golfers in the process and allowing for their input.

CHAPTER 7: EARLY AND LATE SPECIALISATION

7.1 Chapter Introduction

During the field work I was able to find out about the apprentice golfers' journeys, including whether they could be classified as late or early specialisers. In doing so I was able to directly address the issues identified within research question 4:

Research question 4 - To what extent do AASE participants demonstrate characteristics of early or late specialisation in golf?

- What is the variance across the group in terms of late versus early specialisation?
- What are the relative advantages or disadvantages that individuals exhibit due to early or late specialisation?
- How does this affect their chances of 'making it'?

There was only one individual, Paul, who was an early specialiser as defined by Côté and Hay (2002a) and Côté and Fraser-Thomas (2007). Among the others, some were still 'sampling golf' even at this stage in their sporting career, aged 16-19 years old. I spoke to Billy to get his perspective on the group:

Field note - 26th April 2010

I have lunch with Billy and ask him a few questions. We talk about early and late specialisation and Billy says that most of the guys on the AASE course are late specialisers – they tend to specialise when they are 16-18, so late, late specialisers then! Paul (the only early specialiser) did start earlier than the others. I ask Billy more about Paul and if he would practise regularly.

Billy "No, he doesn't; I think he's bored with it all"

JW "What do you mean?"

Billy "He has been hitting balls for years and years and I think he's bored, I saw him at a tournament recently and he came alive, he was almost a different person to the one we see here"

It would seem then that Paul may have been conforming to the pathway of elite performance through early specialisation as described by Côté and Fraser-Thomas (2007). However, Côté and Fraser-Thomas say that this pathway is suited to sports in which peak performance is reached before puberty. Peak performance before puberty does not fit with golf where peak performance, on average, appears to occur around the age of twenty-nine (Colclough 2010). The lack of enjoyment Paul appeared to be experiencing fits with the symptoms of burnout that Brenner (2007) and Roberts (2014) describe for early specialisers.

7.2 Guy

Field note – 18th Jan 2011, Guy

From the age of 6 Guy was a keen ice hockey player and had represented England. He started at local club and moved to Alpha Club (Professional club) but was then poached to go to Beta Club (Professional club) for their under 13s for 2 years. He then moved back to Alpha as the coaching staff went back there and took him with them. Guy represented England in, and against, many other countries including Scandinavian ones and was the star player, being the top goal-scorer. He was on the verge of going to the USA to play professionally when he suffered a really bad injury – he couldn't walk for 2 months. It was the need to get out of the house to rehabilitate that lead him to golf. His dad was going out to play with friends and Guy said he would walk round with him. Guy said of his dad:

"(He) played so badly I couldn't believe it could be that difficult so as my injury allowed I started to play a bit myself. I spent lots of time on the practice ground until one day someone suggested I get a handicap".

He put his score cards in (in order to be allocated a golf 'handicap') and his first handicap was 13. From there he reduced it to 9 in twelve months (and when on AASE reduced from 9 to 3 in 6 months). Since the hockey injury he has never stepped back on the ice again and won't do as:

"I might get tempted to play again and I don't want to get drawn back in".

This is when Golf AASE appeared (his dad found out about the course and encouraged him to apply) and seemed to offer a good option.

Guy said that the opportunity to play with players better than him was key to his improvement while he was on AASE. At the trial (which his dad suggested he went to) he thought he didn't stand a chance of being offered a place and was surprised when he did. On the face of it a good achievement, but as it turns out, everyone gets a place on the course.

In terms of the coaching, Guy was allocated to Billy – they got on well and work together after AASE too. Guy says that Billy saw him at the trial and said:

"I want to coach him"

That's how things began. I wonder what Guy was thinking, how did he know which coach was better or would suit him as a person.

Billy remains the only coach that he has ever worked with. Before AASE, Guy was pretty much self-taught. There were also another couple of apprentice golfers who didn't have a home coach when they began AASE.

Guy says he was doing AASE for the qualification and for the golf playing, but mainly he saw it as a way into the PGA and this was his biggest motivation. He didn't think he could really play professionally as he wasn't good enough and he had come to it too late. Guy loved playing in the competitions and, despite the fact that he didn't

have the best handicap, he made the team for quite a few weeks – selection was based on results in the in-house competition plus wild card selections from the coaches. Guy also plays other club sports: cricket, tennis, rugby and has also found time to become a level 8 skating instructor. Guy was then a late starter in golf and, it appears, was still sampling at this stage.

Guy fell into the late specialisation category, however you define it. He did not take up the game until he was fifteen and then reached an elite level very quickly. Even at 18 years old Guy was still playing four sports to a high level. This pattern of participation would seem to tally with the suggestion of Toms and Colclough (2012) who assert that, as golf is a late specialisation sport, there are distinct advantages in continuing in multiple sports.

7.3 Paul and Simon

Field note - 11th Dec 2009

"How can I be as good as him?" asks Simon as he sits at the back of the bay watching the last part of Paul's lesson with the coach. Its Simon's turn next. Billy is running Paul through his drill for the last time and reminding him what to work on, Paul nods.

Billy "He started much earlier than you; you just have to catch up",

Paul smiles, he is well on his way to 10,000 hours if not past this stage already.

Simon "But how am I going to do that?"

Billy "Well, you could play together, see what he does differently to you, and learn from him".

Now it's Simon's turn to nod; I'm nodding too, but I'm thinking... What's the best age to start golf and at what age one should specialise in golf alone?

Paul is an international player (for Wales) and has the best track record of all the apprentice golfers on the programme, possibly as he is the only early specialiser. He has been in the golf system all of his golfing life, taking the typical route of club, county, regional and then national squads. Which other sports does he play? Turns out none now, just golf and it's been that way for a while.

Paul seems quite a quiet guy, and serious. He walks to college which takes 45 mins and his tutor reports that he always stays until all of this academic work is done. This ties up with the feedback that the coach gives; he does all the he needs to do in terms of AASE, but no more.

"He doesn't practise away from here you know, he didn't do any extra practice this week" says Billy, the coach with a furrowed brow.

He goes on "Simon works five times harder then Paul".

Simon is also coached by Billy. He only started golf two and a half years ago (when he was 13 and a half years old). He went from 28 handicap to 3 in two years, quite an achievement in itself. Before that he was playing football, rugby, basketball all to a high standard – some at national level. Then he suffered an ankle injury and his dad did not want to take him to rugby any more in case of worse injury. He was quite a natural golfer but at the start had 2 lessons and they told him to use his hip action less and his game became worse for a while. Then he went to Billy who said it was his 'magic move' and he needed to work on it and get it going again. Since that time he has wanted to keep it simple and not become too technical – I wonder how this sits with Billy as he prefers the technical method?

So, who is going to make it? Both? Neither? Will the different path they have taken make any difference?

I get a chance to talk to Billy and I ask: "Can Paul make it?"

Billy says he may be able to get to Challenge Tour, as: "He doesn't practise when he is away from here but his last 3 rounds have been 4 under, 4 under, 1 under and he won the pro-am".

I ask how this will compare to Simon and Billy says that Simon has a better natural motion and works:

"Five times harder and is much better motivated. Paul is poor at pitching, poor chipping and poor putting, but he does hole more than he should given his level, but he does know how to score though"

So, can Simon make it?

Billy "Yes"

JW "It's not too late?"

Billy "No, he still has time and his incremental improvements are going to be bigger than Paul's – Paul can only improve by ever smaller margins, the better he becomes. The benefits that Simon had playing other sports may well help him – he may have developed more holistically and be a better rounded athlete, also Simon has had the experience of 'failing' in another sport as he had to give up rugby because of his injury".

But which out of these two golfers is more 'talented', which one took the best route, the one who went through the system and had all the help 'it' could offer – currently a plus 3 handicapper - or the one who came late to golf and became very good very quickly – currently a 2 handicapper?

How do we measure talent in golf? If we were going to invest in one of these golfers, which one would it be? How do we make decisions like this?

I wonder if the bashing of balls is the reason Paul is de-motivated? He 'only' has a golf body. Is the fact that Simon is less 'bored' with practice the reason that he has more potential despite having started so late?

7.4 Wes

Field note - June 2010

Wes tells me that he did lots of sports until he was around 14 at which point he started to concentrate on golf. Up until that point football had been his main sport and he had been on the books of a Premiership football team, but he had a falling out with the coach and so gave up.

7.5 Dexter

Vignette - Dexter

Dexter played football seriously at the ages of 10-12 when he was on the books of a Premiership football team, but he stopped and decided to play golf as his main sport. He tells me it's easier to be good at golf than football; there's less competition. Dexter is injured but hoping to be playing again soon. It's a back injury; just like the one that his dad had that stopped him from playing. He fills his time with visits to the gym and short game practice at the moment at his home club which is xxxxx Golf Club.

7.6 Julie

Vignette – Julie

Julie tells me that she played hockey (her 'main' sport) to a high standard (regional) before she really started golf. She then played both sports and then gave up hockey as she was persistently injured and it was negatively affecting her golf. However, she says that she started golf "too late" to be any good. She is playing off 7 handicap and has been playing golf for 4 years. Interesting that a typical late specialiser like Julie feels that she started too late – maybe this is a bit of an excuse, she does say that she never really had the work ethic to be any good, but she chose golf rather than hockey as you can make a living as a coach much more easily in golf and this is what she wants to do.

Julie has two options following AASE, one to train as a PGA Professional (and therefore coach), or going to America where she has been offered a scholarship at a University to play golf – she says she will keep this option open even though she does not really see herself as a player.

"I want to be a coach" Julie tells me, "I just want to get qualified, get a job coaching and get settled and start my career".

This shows in her grades, she has been getting double distinctions. I talk to Billy about Julie and her career ambitions and he says: "She's not a natural coach".

Clearly not as she hasn't even started her training yet! Billy seems a bit dismissive of Julie, I wonder if this is because her handicap is high compared to others and she's not really interested in being a 'serious player'. Billy does prefer working with the 'Players' and towards the end of the two years, 'Players' are the only apprentice golfers who are attending the golf coaching sessions.

7.7 How does specialisation affect career prospects for apprentice golfers?

How did late or early specialisation affect the apprentice golfers' chances of progressing to the professional playing ranks? Within this cohort of apprentice golfers, not one made it to the next stage of the England talent pathway. Guy, Simon and Julie were of the belief that they came to golf too late to really make it and indeed, Simon dropped out of the course in year two. Perhaps the structure of the England talent pathway, which makes it almost impossible for a later specialiser to achieve representative honours for England, influenced their belief. This position is in contrast to the findings of Colclough (2010) and Bridge and Toms (2013) who believe that golf is a late specialisation sport. This 'talent system' issue needs investigating as it is potentially limiting the size of the talent pool and thus national performance.

It is contradictory that the England talent pathway values early specialisation in a sport that clearly is better suited to late specialisation (Colclough 2010). Indeed, Bridge and Toms (2013) similarly suggest that later specialisation is a positive advantage when correlated with later national honours. AASE appeared to offer a way into the 'talent system' that naturally lent itself to be populated to late specialisers, given its entry criteria. However, there appeared to be no exit route via the England talent pathway for these late specialisers. The 'talent

system' already had them classified as 'too old' and 'too late', and selection for England comes almost entirely from the Under 16s programme - only one individual from the whole national AASE programme has ever gone on to play for England and this individual was already an England international when she entered AASE. Given this, it could be said that the premise of the AASE project was flawed. If this was the case, then the question must be asked what the purpose of AASE was. If it was not to populate the next step of the talent pathway, then was its purpose solely to generate funding?

7.8 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter set out to explore if apprentice golfers could be classified as early or late specialisers (as defined by Côté and Hay, 2002a and Côté and Fraser-Thomas, 2007). Out of the total of twenty-four apprentice golfers only one, Paul, was an early specialiser. Paul was already an international player (ironically for Wales, not England) when he entered the programme and based on a criterion of golf handicap, was by far the best player. Of the other twenty-three apprentice golfers, many had played a number of other sports to a high level before event taking up golf, Guy being a good example here. Guy only took up golf at age 15 and barely eighteen months later was on the AASE course. Guy was improving at a fast rate and although on the face of it was still behind Paul in terms of performance may have quickly reached the same level or surpassed Paul's level. Guy was enthusiastic and improving quickly, Paul by contrast appeared bored with practice and to a degree, showing the early signs of burnout (Coakley and Pike 2014).

The AASE programme marketed a vision, a dream for young golfers, of making it to professional ranks via the England talent pathway. It was a programme overwhelmingly populated by late specialisers yet the overarching system, the England talent pathway of which AASE formed a part, did not allow for the progression of these late specialisers. However, the colleges who ran the programme, and EGU/EWGA who supported it, received large amounts of funding to do so.

CHAPTER 8: DAWNING REALITY

8.1 The end of the AASE journey

Towards the end of the AASE course, I was still undertaking field work and attending the golf coaching sessions each week. At this point the 'Scholars' had abandoned these sessions to focus on their studies, while some of the 'Players' remained. Not only was this the end of the AASE course, it was also the time that the apprentice golfers were about to transition to the next stage of their lives, another 'critical episode'. This was the point at which my placement of apprentice golfers into categories that prioritised the physical capital of sports performance and or the cultural capital of education would be tested in terms of what the apprentice golfers chose to do next. The following is a field note from the last golf coaching session of AASE.

> Field note - April 2011
>
> *I visit the golf club for the last scheduled golf sessions. Only four of the original 24 apprentice golfers have turned up today. They are getting some putting coaching from the coaches. Billy says that he should be away by 2pm and "that's a good result". He says that last week's visit to xxxx Golf Club is probably the reason that there aren't many here. Here today are George, Gordon, Ross and Robert. They say they want to play, so the coaches take them out for 4 holes before lunch. George is first to tee off amid many distractions, mainly from Billy, who is clearly trying to put him off; Billy's questions eventually elicit a reply from George who protests:*

"I'm in my routine!"

In other words, leave me alone. They begin to play and I talk to Adam. He tells me that he is looking to become a PGA Professional after the course and that he has already made arrangements with a local PGA Professional to work under his supervision. The Professional has told him that if he can pass his playing test, then he has a job and a placement for three years. So Adam will spend the next few months playing and trying to enter and perform in some events and then playing in his PGA Playing Ability Test. He doesn't have too high expectations of playing (for a living) and saw the PGA Professional route from quite a way off, he moved away from the initial 'making it to tour' mentality after joining the programme.

I have a chat to George as well as the coaches who tell me about George's performance. George looks like a very serious young man and is dedicated to his golf – even though all of the golfers have a poor 4 holes today. George was coached by Nigel before he started the AASE course and is a member at Nigel's club. He tells me he wants to give playing a go and see how far he can get. He will consider going to college in the US, but doesn't want to do the full time degree course as 'I don't want to be a coach'. He actually wants to be a sports journalist and has been doing an A level in English Language at the same time as AASE and his golf. This is quite impressive seeing as the coaches both agree that he is by far the most dedicated golfer in the cohort. George says that he sees Nigel at the golf club and sees the hours he does and does not want to do this himself - he doesn't want to work evenings and weekends. He says it has been tough to fit everything in but he just wants to work as hard as he can.

Also whilst out playing the holes with the group, Nigel also says to me that: "It'll be different next year; discipline is going to be much tighter".

I need to ask him a bit more about this and what he means, but perhaps that's for another day...

After the course had finished, I met with Alex who gave me an update on the apprentice golfers and whether they had passed the course. In fact most had, although this should not be a surprise given Stephen's comments. All of the apprentice golfers began the course with hopes of playing for a living, but many were following a different path by the end:

Adam. Completed AASE and is now enrolled on the PGA Foundation Degree course and on the way to becoming a PGA Professional.

Andy. Completed AASE. Now on the PGA Foundation Degree course although was considering going to Duchy College which offers a 'private enterprise' version of AASE with warm weather training and coaching, however, this was a very expensive option.

David. Completed AASE. Now working in a retail (non-golf related) shop.

Dexter. Dropped out of AASE. Poor experiences of the golf coaching led him to drop out of the course and he subsequently went on to a sports science HND at another college whilst still playing golf.

Gary. Did not complete AASE. Did not finish the course even though he only had a few elements to finish off, by the end of the course wanted to become a coach. Now in the PGA Foundation Degree training programme.

George. Completed AASE. Intended giving his golf a year and if he was not making progress, then would find something else. He would really like to be a sports journalist.

Gordon. Completed AASE. Was offered a golf scholarship in the USA offered, but now working part-time and playing and also undertaking the PGA Foundation Degree training programme.

Guy. Completed AASE. Now in PGA Foundation Degree training programme but still trying to suceed as a player.

Hal. Completed AASE. At college in the USA on a golf scholarship.

Jake. Completed AASE. Had to stop playing seriously due to injury. Did not value the educational elements of the course, and as predicted, ended up in the family business.

John. Completed AASE and now "will take a couple of years out to think about what I want to do, I'm doing office work at the moment but am going to try and play in lots of events".

Jude. Completed AASE. The plan was to play for a year, but now on PGA Foundation Degree training programme.

Julie. Completed AASE. Played golf less and less throughout the 2 year period of AASE and lacked confidence in her play. Julie felt the AASE culture was "very macho" during the coaching days and the whole group dynamic did not help her. Applied to go to University but could not get a place. Applied for jobs in golf, without success.

Lisa. Completed AASE. Went to University but not a golf-related course.

Luke. Completed AASE. Now training to become personal trainer.

Matthew. Did not complete the course, dropped out in year 1.

Nat. Completed AASE and applied to go to University, was not sure which subject he wanted to study.

Paul. Completed AASE. Went on to play full time golf, still dreaming of 'making it'. Paul won the Welsh order of merit while on the AASE course. Since then is reported to have virtually stopped playing altogether.

Robbie. Completed AASE. Missed golf rather than lectures, but passed the course.

Robert. Completed AASE and began full-time playing.

Ross. Completed AASE.

Simon. Dropped out of AASE in year 1. Now playing full-time.

Stuart. Dropped out, wants to be a car mechanic, but working in the family business.

Wes. Completed AASE. May consider becoming a PGA Professional but at present trying to find a job to help out paying the bills at home.

8.2 Factors affecting apprentice golfer trajectories

8.2.1 'Talent system'

Before the young golfers began the programme, I was invited to the 'AASE Standardisation meeting' by a contact at EGU/EWGA, 'Danny'. The following field note gives a governing body perspective of the programme that is part of the England talent pathway:

> Field note - July 2009, AASE Meeting
>
> *I sit in a meeting of colleges for the AASE standardisation meeting. I meet Alex the course leader from Mid-Town College. My EGU/EWGA contact, Danny, meets and greets people and tells me that this is a full meeting of AASE colleges and that they have a couple of meeting per year. It later transpires that, in fact, there are no more meetings at all; Danny left his post some time after this meeting. It appears that 19 colleges will run the program in the next academic year starting 2009 September. He tells me it's important that girls are admitted onto the course and that the time period after leaving school is very important as there are too many young golfers turning professional (that is, play in 'professional' events for prize money) too soon – AASE, he says, is an antidote to this.*

He tells me that it's important to keep 'them' in education and to learn their trade. Danny says he wants the colleges to be innovative and develop their courses. He goes onto say that AASE will enable the talent stream to be widened and that this will give more support to these youngsters. He says that there are lots of levels in the performance pathway which AASE can assist with and that there will be much more focus on AASE and making it higher profile as time goes by. He also says that the 5 C's (Competence, Confidence, Connection, Character and Caring) are built into AASE – 'coach people, not the swing' he says.

Interesting, sounds good.

Danny also says that AASE can facilitate the sharing of best practice across sports and that AASE should have a value for Higher Education in the future. This would allow the student the access to Higher Education courses which at present is problematic. He goes on to say that the effect of the 2012 home Olympics will be to raise awareness and that it will deliver more jobs and opportunities in golf and sport.

This all sounded ideal. Coaching the person, not the swing, giving these young people another option if the dream of playing golf did not work out is very commendable and appropriate. Also, widening the talent pathway seems like a logical thing to do. The more potentially talented golfers that have support at the lower end of the England talent pathway the better the outcomes should be at the top. This was an excellent opportunity for apprentice golfers and a positive development of the 'talent system'. EGU/EWGA (2009; 2) said that AASE is the "perfect programme for aspiring players as it gives them more quality coaches; better access to modern well equipped facilities; and the use of new technologies, with access

to sports science professionals, technicians and top quality medical professionals". The system then marked these apprentice golfers out as special, the programme sounded inspiring.

The Trials Day was another part of the England talent pathway and 'talent system' which could have been managed more effectively by EGU/EWGA. In simple terms, the Trials Day was a talent identification process and being such a 'critical episode' for golfers and system alike, needed to be undertaken on a more evidence-based approach, possibly from a bio-psycho-social perspective (Bailey et al 2010), or similar, standpoint? The measurement and/or assessment of potential must surely have included more than simply a technical element - how can current performance relate to potential? A session with the coach away from hitting balls, to talk about their golf, their journey to this point (including how long they had been playing golf and therefore if they were an early or late specialiser as this must be a factor when looking at an individual's potential) would have been a valuable opportunity in which to better assess the attitude and desire of the young golfer. This information in conjunction with the technical assessment, although not ideal, would have been wider in scope and perhaps helped to identify suitable athletes for this support. Ideally, the governing bodies should have designed the precise method of assessment so that the levels of ability and suitability could be standardised across the country.

Field note – 14th August 2009

The trial process is flawed and the college recruits whoever it wants…and as many candidates as it can with no reference to the EGU/EWGA guidelines.

This was not ideal, but as Bailey (2005) points out, talent identification is problematic and factors to consider in this regard include: 'the problem of prediction', 'the problem of participation' and the 'problem of potential'. There is no current model of talent identification and talent pathway management which appears to be fool proof, but the management of talent pathway factors here would seem to have been both non-cohesive and inefficient.

AASE was billed by EGU/EWGA (2009) as player-centred, including individualised coaching. However, the reality is that the coaching was coach - and therefore 'talent system' - centred. Individual golfers were not assessed or asked about their needs and coaches were allocated based on who they want to coach, not what was best for the player. The structure of the programme was pre-eminent. This resulted in very limited agency for the apprentice golfer; they had the choice to join the programme or not, but after that their input was minimal and their only way to affect change was to refuse the coaching on offer, or ultimately, to drop out.

The England talent pathway is designed to cater for, and therefore is culturally aligned to, early specialisation; however, golf is not an early specialisation sport. Selection and inclusion in the England talent pathway was based on current performance that is not always a good indicator of talent or potential – giftedness and potential may be better measured by speed of development and improvement (Tranckle and Cushion 2006). As well as these issues with the way the talent system was set up, there are other issues in addition, Rongen et al (2015) state that such systems are often based on subjectivity and are judgemental in their nature. Consequently the 'talent system', in the form of AASE, not only negated apprentice golfer agency, but it offered no exit route to the 'dazzling' professional career its promotional literature described, further eroding an individual's power over their own destiny.

8.2.2 ‘Luck’

There is no doubt that within the journey of these apprentice golfers through AASE, ‘luck’ played a major part: talent identification systems are often unjust and unfair as they exaggerate the role of luck rather than seeking the more desirable approach of neutralising it (Bailey 2007). In some ways you could argue that, because all those who applied for a place on AASE were successful, that represents ‘good luck’ for all of the apprentice golfers. However, perhaps that only really applied to the individuals who, with a more robust talent identification process, would not have made it on to the programme. Perhaps poor talent identification was conversely ‘bad luck’ for the truly talented; if a focused group of talented individuals had been recruited to the programme, they might have enjoyed more intensive support and achieved greater success for themselves and the programme as a whole.

Many of the apprentice golfers studied here reported that injury in another sport (‘bad luck’?) led them into golf, the AASE programme and future careers in golf. In even entering this stage in the England talent pathway, it could be argued that these apprentice golfers had been ‘lucky’, born to the right parents and from the right social class (Toms and Colclough 2012), factors over which they have no control. The fact that these apprentice golfers were identified and treated as the special ones within the college setting, could also, on the face of it, be seen as ‘good luck’?

Vignette – The Special Ones – lucky….. or unlucky?

> *The special ones cannot be expelled anyway as the college needs the money. As such...they are in control. A powerful position. The college needs them and lionises them – they act up and are special – they are given special treatment but don't take advantage of the benefits like the free gym etc. Maybe they don't want to be special or lucky. Maybe it's because they can take advantage but choose not to, cocking a snoop at the college, staff, EGU/EWGA and the world in general...Big Time Charlies perhaps, even though in the world of golf performance, they aren't even on the radar at this stage. You could say they are 'lucky', but paradoxically here the 'lucky' students at the college are being cosseted and therefore may be being made soft – does this mean they are actually <u>un</u>lucky in that this will lead them to standing less chance of succeeding – their work ethic and commitment is not being tested and stretched; are they treated <u>too</u> softly?*

When I spoke to Dexter and Wes, they told me about the claustrophobic nature of the course:

> *Dexter - "We don't get to meet or socialise with anybody outside of the course really".*

So it appeared to be that the apprentice golfers were special within the college setting and a homogenous group, but it did not necessarily feel this way from within the group. Indeed, if the exit routes into performance as promised by the programme were compromised, then perhaps one could argue that far from being 'lucky', apprentice golfers were being set up for

failure and as such, their high profile and treatment as special was ultimately misleading and potentially humiliating.

In this research the only identified way that the apprentice golfers managed to have any input into coach allocation was their alignment to the AASE coaches before the course began. The action of seeking out the AASE coaches and working with them before Trials Day, and therefore seeking an advantage, was a very sensible approach and in theory improved their chances of being offered a place on the course.

8.2.3 'Critical episodes' and 'personal outlook'

The journeys of the apprentice golfers were influenced all the way through by 'critical episodes' that happened to them and by their attitude and 'personal outlook' in reaction to these events. As discussed previously the Trials Day process was very much a part of the 'talent system', but is also a 'critical episode' in the lives of these apprentice golfers. The fact that they all made it through the process does not make it any less pivotal. Once on the programme the allocation of coach to player was another critical event. For many this worked out well, but for others it did not and may have been a contributing factor to future drop-off in performance or dropout from the programme or sport. The acute event of coach allocation was critical, but the chronic nature of the fact that the player and coach then worked together over a two-year period was perhaps even more significant. If the allocation were successful that success would be felt over an extended period. However, if coach allocation were inappropriate, this too would be felt over an extended term. Having said that, the individual's 'personal outlook', his/her agency, could mitigate these factors that are structural in nature. Having been allocated the 'wrong coach', the apprentice golfer could still have made the best

of the situation instead of letting this become a ‘moment of crisis’ (Denzin 1989), it could have been turned into a ‘crystallising experience’ (Pickard and Bailey 2009) and been used in a positive way. Wes used the fact that his allocated coach, Billy, was completely different from his home coach to his advantage. However, Wes was ‘lucky’ enough to have a father who had some knowledge in the area of golf coaching and could act as an advisor.

CHAPTER 9: REFLECTIONS AND UPDATES

9.1 Did AASE deliver its stated outcomes?

9.1.1 Apprentice golfers

AASE promised much, but reality dawned for 'Players'. Not one of the apprentice golfers studied here made it to the next stage of the England talent pathway. Some gave up realising that they were not going to succeed, that the competition was too strong. Others, like Wes and Dexter, continue to pursue the dream; it is probably only a question of time before they too realise they are not going to succeed. Given their age, they should have been making big strides and playing in bigger and bigger events, getting sponsors and building a career. Wes is working 40-50 hours a week in a golf shop, while Dexter is in Portugal playing on the lowest level of satellite tour, whose only criteria is being able to pay the entry fee.

The AASE qualification did provide 'Scholars' with an exit route, most notably to the PGA Training Programme and a Foundation Degree in Professional Golf. So perhaps this was a successful outcome; they had the opportunity to play golf for longer, did not succeed playing professionally but could utilise their academic qualifications to pursue alternative careers. It is possible that the middle class sensibilities of these individuals coupled with the educational (cultural) capital offered by the course secured a positive outcome.

Field note 21th April 2011 – Stephen

JW "How many AASE graduates made it to play for a living?"

Stephen "I don't think anyone who has ever done the course has made it….most decided that, for whatever reason, they didn't want to 'make it' and so an alternative career option was better for them. A number became interested in doing the PGA Foundation Degree and while this is a sound career move for them, I don't think the aim of the AASE programme is to produce future PGA professionals. In fact, what is the aim of the AASE programme? Very few of the students even play county level golf let alone break into the England elite squads."

So did being a moderate or perhaps model student, that is, a 'Player and Scholar' work? Wes was conscientious regarding both his college work and progress as a performer, although so far, this has not translated into professional success. However, there were apprentice golfers such as Stuart and Dexter who did not really gain anything from the course at all. Both dropped out, not really valuing either the performance or the educational elements of the programme.

Are golfers who value the security of education immediately compromised and therefore destined to fail? Must one have to be totally focused on the pursuit of succeeding professionally without distraction? Is the model of complete and utter focus on sport actually a better way of ensuring success? Does the Danish model, with sport and education completely aligned put too much pressure on young people? In Parker's work (2000b) club staff were asking trainees to take part in the education opportunity, but immediately negating it by insisting on a total commitment to footballing success. In this case the 'talent system' did not offer an exit route to higher levels of performance, so were the apprentice golfers sold a dream that could never come to fruition?

9.1.2 EGU/EWGA

AASE was a governing body-led programme and as such brought funding into EGU/EWGA. Danny seemed to be motivated by offering the educational added value of AASE, but the question must be asked, was AASE just a money-making exercise? Late specialising golfers, which AASE was specially set up to cater for, were not in any way valued by the England talent pathway, which spent most of its time encouraging individuals to specialise early. This is short-sighted; Colclough (2010) points out that many successful professional golfers start early, aged 2 years in the most extreme example, but many started to play golf later, 14 years old being at the other extreme. A player taking up golf at age 14 may have secured a place onto the AASE course, but would probably also have been discarded by the England talent pathway as they would have been unlikely to meet the required standard of the next intervention within the time frame allowed. The England talent pathway and the 'talent system' then was a major factor in mediating the journey of apprentice golfers, but was open to abuse in terms of how its principles were applied; this led to the element of 'luck' being over-emphasised.

Many of the teachers at 'Walton Grange' in Parker's study were not really interested in teaching disruptive football trainees and let them leave class having done the bare minimum of work. This was in stark contrast to the teachers at Mid-Town College; Alex wanted to make sure everyone completed the course:

> Field note - 29th Jan 2010
>
> *I chat to Stephen about the programme after a supervised study period.*

"We have to get them all through" Stephen says. "I have to chase around and badger quite a few of them...it's the same every year"

JW "Why is that?"

Stephen "Well, honestly...Alex needs to make sure they all get through 'cause of the funding"

JW "Right..."

Stephen "The college gets paid for all those who complete"

JW "So that's difficult for you is it?"

Stephen "Well, it means that most of my time is spent with the ones who don't care, which isn't great. Those who just get on with it do, and then others who are a pain get me chasing them, but they don't really seem to be motivated to finish at all"

Field note – 20th April 2011 Stephen

Stephen "In my opinion a good proportion of the kids shouldn't have even come onto the programme, they had no chance of becoming elite level golfers and this showed very quickly. To be brutally honest, they majority didn't have a chance of completing the academic requirements, but the reality is that the college needs the students for their enrolment numbers so they come onto the programme"

This was a worrying insight. The college was taking on students principally in order to secure the funding; recruitment onto the course was based on maximising the number of places. The time of the tutors was largely spent with those who were not motivated. Perhaps it is always like this in education and in life in general, as stated by Pareto's law - in this case spending 80% of your time on 20% of the worst students? But, on the other hand this was part of the talent programme of the governing body – should there have been some monitoring and regulation from EGU/EWGA?

9.1.3 College and the coaches

The college and coaches seemed to gain the most from AASE. The college applied for extra places, which were granted without reference to any quality assurance checks, and funding was forthcoming. The coaches were paid for their time and their coaching and this increased during the programme as other specialist staff were dispensed with and more time given over to the coaches (contrary to what had been promised by the college and EGU/EWGA at the outset).

Coaching was characterised by delivery based on a coach-centred model that clearly did not suit most apprentice golfers. Rather than developing each individual to maximise his or her potential, the coaches delivered their sessions in an egotistical fashion. The career aspirations and personal performance of apprentice golfers appeared to be secondary to changing a player's technique to fit the coach's ideal model. Matthews et al (2013; 76) suggest that in so far as coaching is concerned, "there is no 'one-size-fits-all' magic formula how to coach", and that rather, each party, coach and player, have to "work hard at establishing a relationship where each party is aware of what the other requires and is willing to fulfil that need". Many

of these apprentice golfers did not benefit from a giving relationship with the coach, rather, they were offered his own industrialised approach (the production line) in which the coach seemed to be delivering the same lesson again and again rather than looking after the wants and needs of that individual. This was a fundamental problem as the apprentice golfers and parents were promised player-centred coaching as evidenced in the artefacts of the programme, the literature, web information and words of the performance director.

In this way the college, EGU/EWGA and the coaches enforced a coaching structure that overrode the input (and possibly best interests) of individual apprentice golfers. Having said that, the apprentice golfers did exercise some influence in this case; some left the course unable or unwilling to submit to what was being asked of them, others misbehaved and rebelled whilst staying within the programme. The desire of the college to keep the apprentice golfers on the programme and therefore access the funding meant that apprentice golfers agency was actually quite powerful and they could exert a degree of control.

9.2 Comparisons to other sports, countries and systems

Historically, sport and education have been delivered separately and are seen as competing and conflicting pursuits. However, the recent developments in the way sport academies and sports performance are managed have seen the delivery of these fields begin to overlap. Indeed, in the case described by Christensen and Sørensen (2009), sport and education were delivered concurrently. The culture of society in Demark, including ‘Team Danmark’, drove the sports system to deliver sport and education simultaneously.

The young people in the football clubs described by Christensen and Sørensen were forced to take both sport and education seriously. This led to problems for some individuals; one talks of his frustration of combining school and sport "last year I was diagnosed with stress. I was unhappy with myself and the place (club)...Over the first 6 months it went well, but then it started going downhill. Then everything went down and I was good for nothing" (Christensen and Sørensen 2009; 124).

The work of Cosh and Tully (2014; 2) would seem to match these findings - "Increasingly, athletes are expected to undertake tertiary education contemporaneously with their sporting careers. However, to do so may prove difficult and stressful". This excessive stress of undertaking sport and education at the same time can, according to Christensen and Sørensen (2009; 124), act as "an obstacle to the healthy development in young talents", and in so doing be a deterrent to sporting achievement. The marriage of sport and education can only work according to Christensen and Sørensen (2009) if an individual:

- Has good academic ability
- Lives close to the club
- Has regular contact with family and friends
- Does not spend too much time on public transport

If these factors are in place, then one could conform to the Team Danmark image of a 'complete sporting person' and successfully juggle sport and education concurrently. However, if these factors are not in place then the likely outcomes are:

- Significantly lower exam results
- High level of stress
- Dropping out of school
- Mental breakdown

The cultural, societal and parental pressure to achieve both in a sporting and academic sense served to act as a stressor for these football talents. “There was no point in leaving school with a really bad average grade. I couldn’t do much with that” (Christensen and Sørensen 2009; 122). Some though did give up “I’m really glad I did it (drop out of school). Up until now at any rate” (Christensen and Sørensen 2009; 122) this individual secured a job working 18 hours a week which gave him an income and made it easier for him to travel to and from the football club and he is now “a central player in the team” (Christensen and Sørensen 2009;123), but for how long? Another football talent says “I don’t get high marks anymore” (Christensen and Sørensen 2009; 123) suggesting a move away from education over time.

Christensen and Sørensen (2009; 130) suggest that, to ensure sport and education might work together, a system would need to be in place that provided a “nuanced and individual supervision that provides for flexible planning of their youth education, while taking into account individual resources and talent potential”. This approach describes an ‘anti-system’ which would encompass unique programmes aligned to the wants and needs of each athlete. However, due to its very nature, this type of arrangement would be complex and expensive for governing bodies and clubs to run.

The cultural differences between Denmark and the UK have meant that a different approach has been undertaken here. As identified by both Parker and McGillivary, academic study is often not valued by sporting organisations and sports coaches. Historically education was as good as forced upon football apprentices. The marriage of sport and education within football has been more problematic than in golf due in part to the habitus of social class; traditionally working class football apprentices undervalued education. In this research, middle class golf apprentices were more easily 'sold' the educational element of AASE. The golf apprentices studied here were more culturally aligned with education and applied for places on the course knowing full well that there was a significant educational element to the course. However, did some of the parents coerce their children to undertake the course, or did the golfers realise that the educational element would appeal to parents and agree to it to 'keep them happy'? Golf apprentices did seem to have more of an eye on the future than their football equivalents; they were more realistic about their chances of potential success, many moving from being 'Players and Scholars' at the start of the programme to being 'Scholars' or 'über-scholars' by the end. It could be argued that the focus on education, and the alternative exit routes from the programme that it provided, immediately undermined and compromised their chances of making it as it deflected their focus from sport. Christensen and Sørensen (2009) concluded that dreams of playing are reined in by the dawning reality of a life away from sport, with education seen as a factor that deflects from total dedication and therefore does not allow participants to fulfil their whole potential in either field.

9.3 AASE update

The AASE programme as described in this research has been discontinued. There is still an intervention labelled 'AASE', as there was in 2009, but this is the regional under 18s

programme. This involves golfers who are undertaking ‘A’ levels coming together in regional squads at various times during the year for coaching. In this way the academic standard is higher than the college based AASE; ‘A’ Levels are more highly valued than BTECs and the claustrophobic nature of the AASE college course has therefore been negated. Golfers now go to regular colleges without any reference to their golf.

9.4 Commercial golf academies

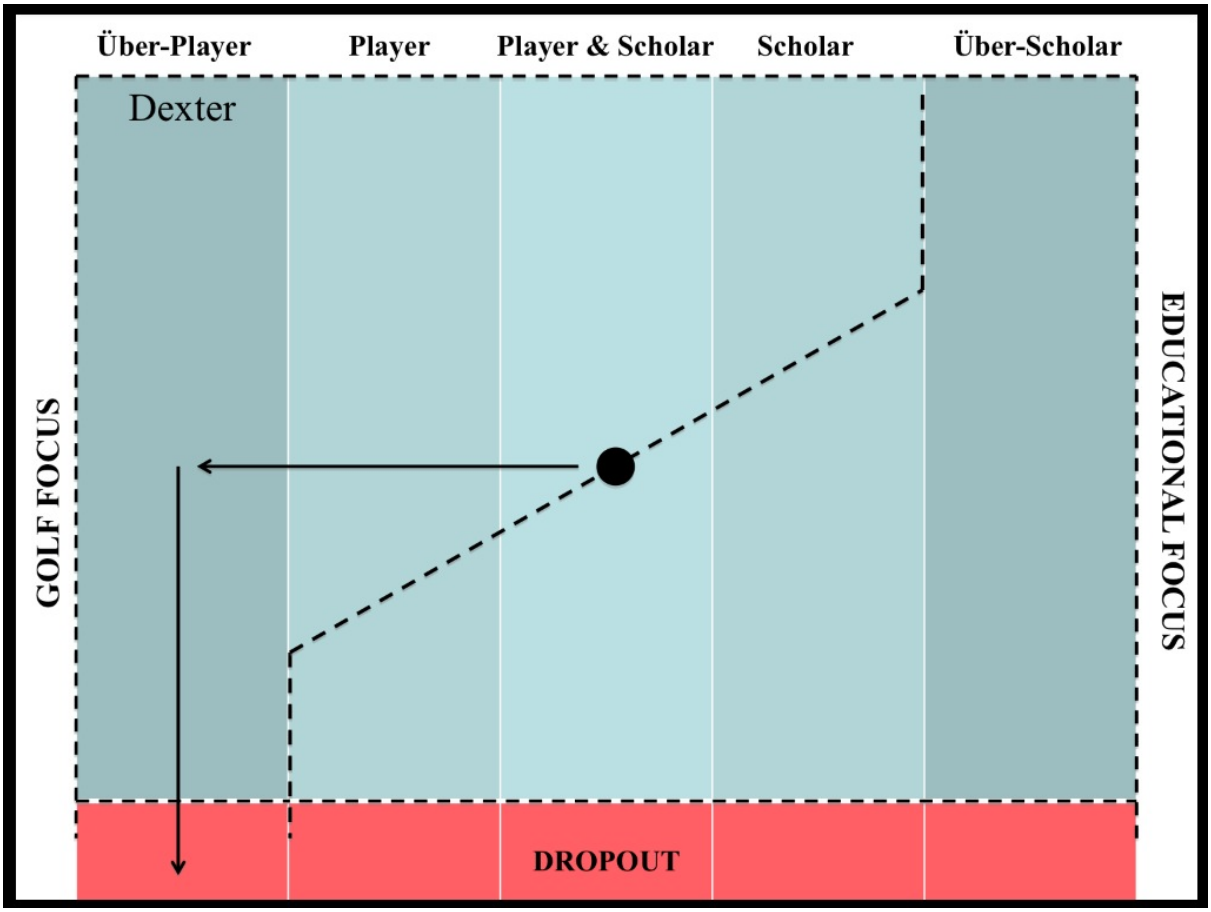
As mentioned above, colleges are no longer offering AASE through the golf governing bodies but, seeing the potential to make money from this market, many still to offer a similar commercial product that continues to seemingly offer a route to sporting success. Many commercial operators charge significant fees to aspiring young people and their parents; Mid-Town College now promotes a very similar course and Billy has set up his own ‘academy’ which offers the heady mix of sport and education. This pattern is duplicated across many sports and encourages early specialisation; it has also led to parents becoming more involved in, and concerned about, the sporting development and success of their children; something that often leads to extreme behaviour on their part (Coakley and Pike 2014). The result is that programmes “in football, tennis, swimming, golf and other sports now boast an explicit emphasis on making children into headline-grabbing, revenue-producing sports machines” (Coakley and Pike 2014; 126); the dreams of sporting success continue to be peddled.

9.5 After AASE

I contacted some of the apprentice golfers after the course had finished to find out how their journeys in golf were progressing.

9.5.1 Dexter

Dexter always took the golf performance aspect of the course far more seriously than the educational aspect. I classified Dexter as an Über-player in the first year and during the second year he dropped out of the course altogether. His journey is mapped in the Conceptual model of engagement, below.



[Diagram 5 – Conceptual model of engagement: Dexter]

After the course finished, I was in contact with Dexter to check his progress:

Vignette – Dexter February 2011

After I saw Dexter the last time (3 months ago) he was advised not to play or even practise his short game due to his back injury. He didn't pick up a club for 4 months, which, he said, was really difficult. Two weeks back into golfing, he broke his wrist and that was 4 weeks ago and he will be out for a further 6-8 weeks.

Dexter is now at a local college and has been there since September. He is doing a Diploma in sport and exercise science and is due to finish in May 2012. He says it's a lot more social than AASE and that he was just part of a smaller group with AASE and he likes having a wider circle of friends there. He finishes most days at 2-3 pm and can then go and play some golf. He also has Tuesday off and he dedicates this time to golf and the gym. He says he loves going to the gym and is working on strength and core work at present. His plan is to have a year off after the course and then will either go to the USA to go to college or do his PGA training.

Dexter is currently playing in a county second team and county boys and thinks he will break into the first team this year, if and when his wrist is better. He says that it's quite boring and he doesn't really like playing county.

Dexter "You can't really say no".

He says the format of competitions does not help apart from the singles which is 'good practice'. The second team is made up of young golfers with older golfers ones

in the first team. The coaching is done by Graham but it's not too technical and has been mainly focused on course strategy etc. This has been good for Dexter as he is still working with the same coach that he was working with before AASE.

Dexter's parents are very happy that he is back in college and have supported him all the way including the decision to leave AASE. His reasons to leave, when I ask him, are the same as before, too far away, content of the course not great but mainly that the coaching was not really meeting his needs, in fact, making him worse. This is a concern as the coaching had been highlighted by Dexter's dad to me at the trial; his concern that the AASE coaching would not fit with his home coach seems to have come true. It's a shame that the college and the coaches could not have done something more from the start to make sure that this didn't happen. It means the college has lost a student, and presumably the funding for his place, and the coaches have lost out on coaching a potentially high level golfer. This is a shame and seems like Dexter wasted a couple of years in the process.

I ask Dexter if he could have just worked with his home coach as part of AASE and he would have loved to. He would have seen this as a great benefit to the course and he might still be on the course if this was the case. Instead, he had to go to coaching he didn't want (and potentially become confused with more coaching intervention – the very thing that he was hoping to avoid) and then have to pay his own coach too. He says that he could have invested some time with his home coach on course management etc and this would have been more productive and useful.

Field note – February 2014

JW "How are you? Last time we spoke your back was playing up?"

Dexter "The back is all sorted now thanks, completely fine and I'm playing full-time"
JW "Oh right, good stuff. What are you playing in?"

Dexter "I'm in Spain at the moment playing on the xxx Tour (a low level satellite tour with no playing standard entry requirement), I'm having some issues with my game though"

JW "Oh dear, what's going on?"

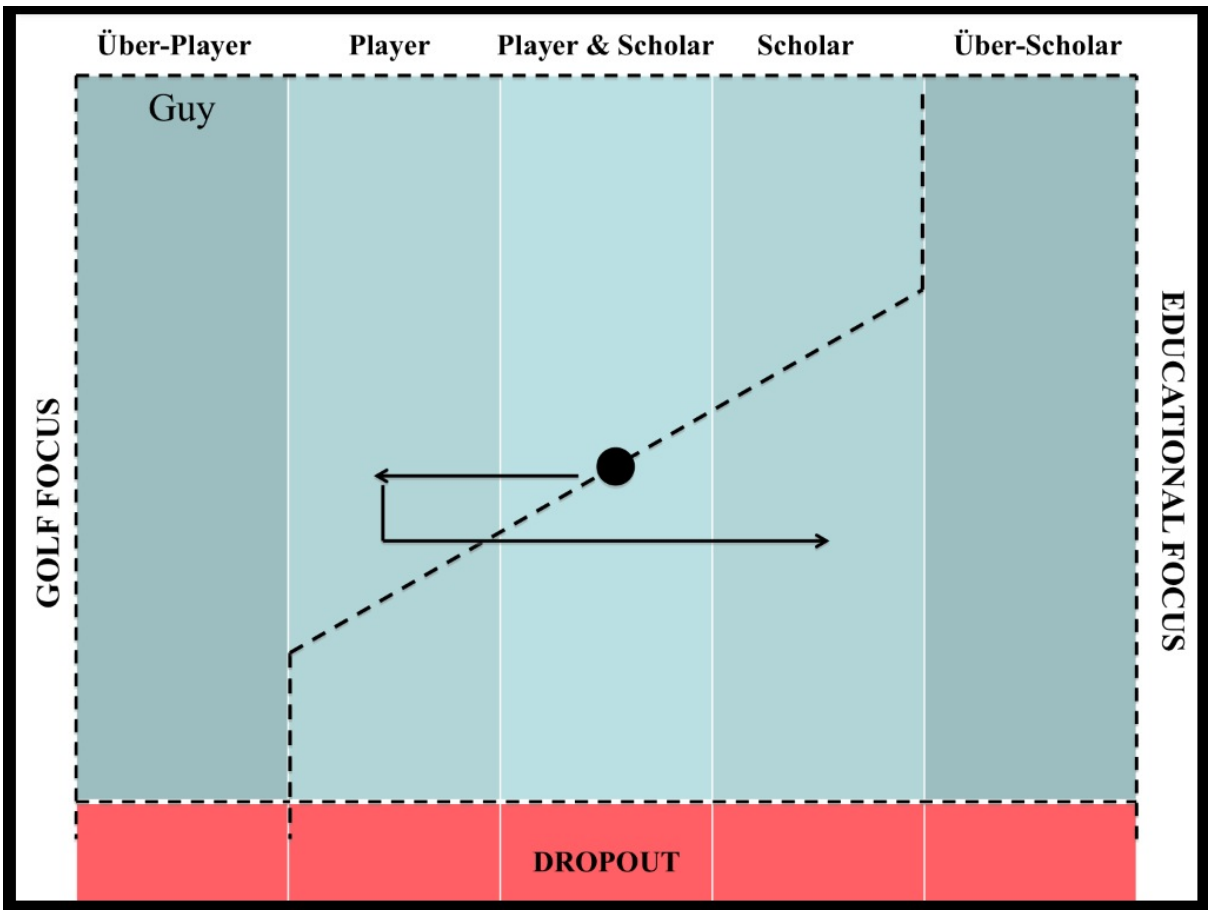
Dexter "Everything looks and feels good, but it's just not clicking, I don't know why. It will come I have just got to keep plugging away"

JW "Well, good luck"

9.5.2 Guy

Guy was an interesting individual having come to golf late. In his early years Guy was a high-level ice hockey player until injury forced him to quit. Like many of the apprentice golfers, Guy had aspirations to play golf professionally for a living, during the first year of the course I classified Guy as a 'Player', but during his second year he realised that this was

not going to happen and started to focus on his academic work. I classified Guy as a 'Scholar' during year two. Guy's journey is set out below in the Conceptual model.



[Diagram 6 – Conceptual model of engagement]

After the course finished, I was in contact with Guy to check his progress:

> Field note - Jan 2011
>
> *Guy is now a first year trainee on the PGA Foundation Degree training program; he graduated from the Mid-Town College. Even at the start of AASE Guy saw it as a way into PGA training, but was surprised when he called the PGA to apply to join the*

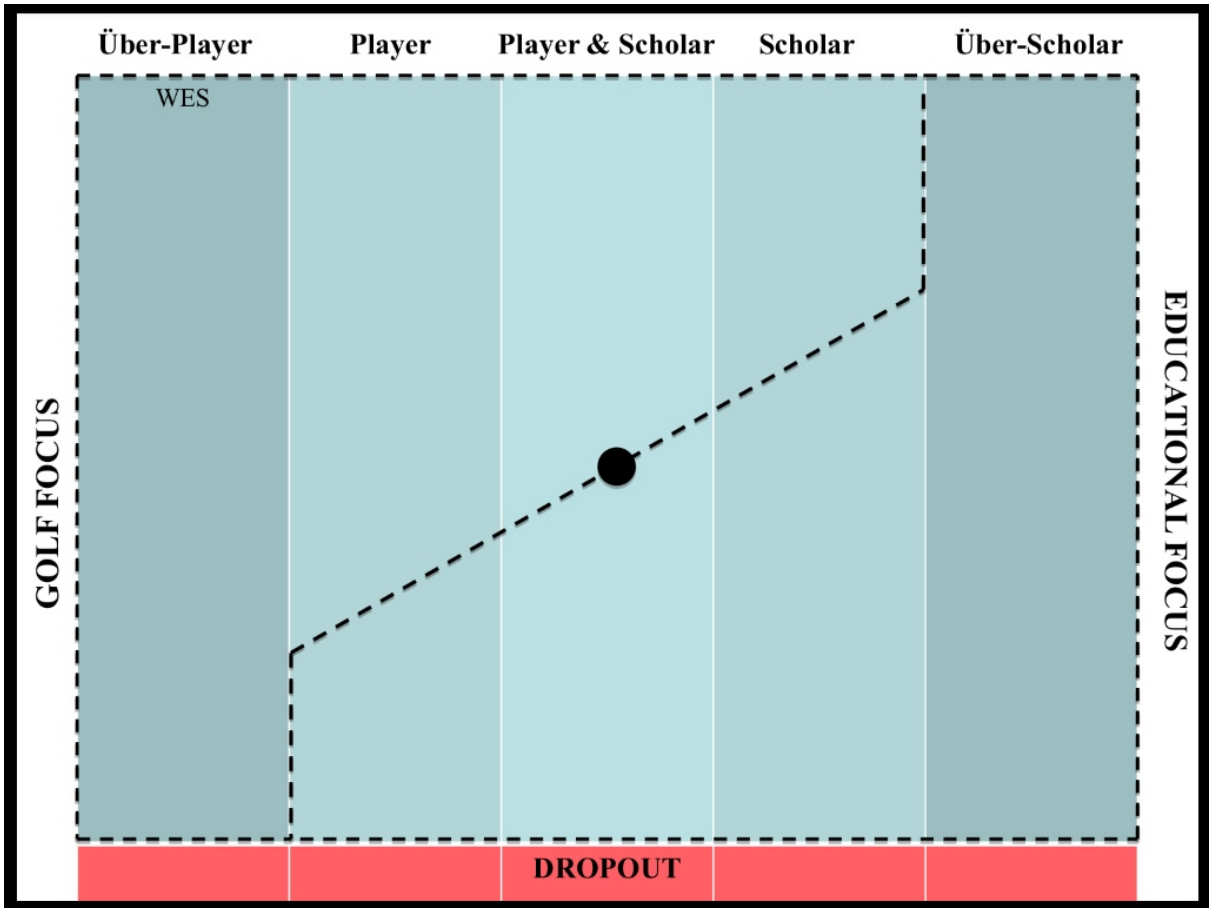
Training Program that they didn't know anything about it. In this way he feels he was misled by AASE and Mid-Town College when he joined the programme, they didn't make any connection with the PGA or make his progression there by providing information or links. Guy says that his parents have supported his golf journey all the way through but always wanted him to have some educational element going to act as a backup plan – this is true of the AASE course and the PGA training he is now doing. Guy has developed a strong relationship with Billy whom he met through the AASE and kept lessons going as well as using him as a bit of a mentor.

Guy was aware of other members of his cohort going into PGA training and he knows most of them quite well and is still in touch with them – many seem to be 'Players' who are still trying to make it on the Tour, having no back up plan. For his part, Guy says that 'learning the PGA way' will help him to be a better golfer and self-teach him about coaching and his own game, although he is really focused on becoming a PGA Professional rather than playing for a living. He likes playing and as a PGA assistant professional he has the opportunity to play in tournaments and has played in quite a few already.

Reflecting on his coaching experience in AASE, Guy recognises that Billy's a technical coach, but that he really needs to 'feel' things – so Billy suggests physical positions so he can feel where and how his body needs to move. Guy says that now Billy is there to guide and mentor him, he will check up on things from time to time and they will have a discussion.

9.5.3 Wes

Wes and George were the only apprentice golfers who I classified as 'Player and Scholar' all the way through the course. As shown in the Conceptual model below, Wes started in the middle column and stayed there throughout.



[Diagram 7 - Conceptual model of engagement: Wes]

After the course finished, I was in contact with Wes to check his progress:

Field note - July 2011

Wes "I don't feel I have improved as much as I should have done during the AASE course, I feel there should have been more support from the college when we finished, like the coaching sessions until the end of term, but these seemed to finish early. I am working part time at xxxxx Golf Club and entering as many competitions as I can, my handicap is still 3".

Studious individuals like Wes were on top of their college work from the start and therefore did not have to do a lot of catching up towards the end of their time at college. However, he did miss out on coaching towards the end as many others students didn't want the coaching on offer or were at college trying to finish off their work. What Wes really needed to know was which competitions to play in and where they were. No such information was provided by the college or through the coaches. Wes says that "the coaches were just concerned with making us look good on the range, but not really interested in playing and actual performance".

Field note - September 2011

Wes tells me that he is now looking for a job and just had a phone interview with the jobcentre – he says he needs to pay his way and give some money to his mum.
Wes tells me he was so confused and there was so much going on in his head from what the AASE coaches have told him that he has gone to a new coach who has said: "Your technique is fine, let's leave it alone, let's work on scoring".

Wes says he is striking the ball better than ever but the scoring isn't coming. He has hit a bit of a wall in terms of performance and is making things overcomplicated. It sounds like the new coach has identified this and is just working on other areas. Wes tells me that looking back he just did technical adjustments week after week and these went OK, but then there was always another one to do. He has now reached the point where he has left AASE and doesn't have the interaction with the coaches there and has been left metaphorically scratching his head. He says that he did so much technical work during the two years on AASE, all of which was at the golf range, that he's worn out his 6 iron, I laugh, but he says,

"No really, it's worn out!"

This situation seems rather extreme. There has to be more to coaching these golfers than a repeated mass of technical instruction on a range without seeing the golfers on the course. I asked if there were skills tests set up to measure progress and he replied that there were but that these were not really followed through and that they were not given as much importance as the technical instruction. His handicap reduction went like this: Open evening = 12, AASE start of year one = 8, AASE end of year one = 3, AASE second year = 4 to 5 then back to 3.4. Wes feels he is stuck in a rut and is confused; although he hits the ball well, he is not 'scoring'.

Field note - February 2014

JW "How are you getting on, how's the golf?"

Wes "Hi, long time no speak. I'm very well thanks, just trying to put together a golf schedule for the upcoming season"

JW "That's great, still going down the playing route then?"

Wes "Yep, I'm playing off 2 now (two handicap, he was three handicap in July 2011, so not much progress since then) and working in two golf shops and trying to fit this in with practice and play"

It's going to be very difficult for Wes, he must be in his early 20's now and if he hasn't achieved a plus handicap and made it along the playing route, it's going to be tough. Sounds strange but there will be younger golfers snapping at his heels now. He really needs to be making progress at this point, taking incremental steps along the way to and through satellite tours to the Challenge and main Tour, not working in a golf shop for 40-50 hours and dreaming of success.

JW "How are you getting on with coaching, is there someone you are working with at the moment?"

Wes "Yes, I'm working with Nigel although I only see him every 6 weeks or so, but I work 40-50 hours a week so finding time to practise is difficult...I still have dreams of playing for a living"

JW "Ok"

Wes "I might look to do the PGA (training programme) soon, but it's quite expensive".

9.6 Chapter Conclusion

Apprentice golfers started AASE intending to play golf professionally for a living. They also signed up by default to the educational parts of the programme. Mid-Town College (2008) advertised the programme on this basis, that is, that the course was for individuals with a realistic chance of playing as a main career goal, but with the safety net of education if this did not work out. This research found that just two individuals followed both of these pursuits concurrently through the course and in so doing exhibited attributes of both 'Player' and 'Scholar'. Most apprentice golfers though did gravitate to being more focussed on playing professionally or seeking alternative career routes fairly quickly. Some of the apprentice golfers became more extreme in their priorities and I classified these individuals as either 'Über-player' or 'Über-scholar'.

One could argue then that the programme was a success giving time and opportunity for apprentice golfers to decide where their future lay. The fact that many of these golfers soon made their mind up which option to pursue is not necessarily a negative. However, it could also be argued that sport and education delivered together was too much for these individuals to cope with: both Christensen and Sørensen (2009) and Cosh and Tully (2014) report that the side effects of this concurrent delivery can include both stress and burnout. Perhaps because of these factors, apprentice golfers tended to prioritise either playing or education.

There is also an argument that in order to achieve success that complete and utter focus on that pursuit must be maintained: to concurrently undertake educational qualifications 'just in case' signals an immediate compromise.

The programme seemed to be a success for Mid-Town College. Twenty-four students signed up to the course and twenty completed it, securing funding from Skills Active. Many 'Scholars' also found alternative career paths, notably an exit route to the PGA Training Programme and a Foundation Degree in Professional Golf and a pathway towards a career as a PGA Golf Professional. However, the college did not receive funding for the four 'Players' who dropped out of the course before it finished. These apprentice golfers still intended to follow their dream of playing professionally, but chose to do so outside the auspices of the programme and the talent pathway. This was perhaps due in part to a coaching offer that did not meet their wants and needs.

The AASE programme was designed to enrich the England talent pathway with individuals who had a realistic chance to become a playing professional. Of the twenty-four apprentice golfers who began the course, twenty-three were late specialisers (as defined by Côté and Hay (2002a) and Côté and Fraser-Thomas (2007)). This was an issue because the next step in the England talent pathway was effectively closed to them; only an early specialiser could meet the entry criteria at that point and no account was taken of their individual journey in golf. Ironically, the one early specialiser on the course who could meet the entry criteria at the next step in the pathway was from Wales and therefore ineligible anyway. Because apprentice golfers were late specialisers not only could they not access the next stage of the pathway, but nor could they break into a county squad, the base level of the England talent pathway.

CHAPTER 10: CONCLUSION

10.1 Chapter Introduction

The world of professional sport offers an intoxicating package to aspiring young athletes. As well as huge financial rewards, fame, fortune and success are also potentially on offer. As such many young athletes invest significant amounts of time training and practising their chosen sport in the hope of progressing to professional ranks (Coakley and Pike 2014). However, the nature of sport, talent systems and talent identification means that only a very few will succeed. The vast majority of these young athletes will have, at some point, to face the reality that their sporting ambitions will remain unfulfilled. Many of these young people will have neglected their education in order to focus on sport and, as such, they are faced with the harsh reality of a future in which they will need to follow a different path (David 2005).

With this context in mind, this research focused on apprentice golfers who dreamed of sporting success. The AASE golf programme was part of the England talent pathway for golf and, as such, part of the system designed to identify and support talented players who had the potential to fulfil their ambitions. The overarching question of this study was to examine how the apprentice golfers experienced the journey through the programme, to understand their expectations and experiences and to monitor their career path. The intended outcome of the programme itself was to propel the apprentice golfers towards a career of professional golfing achievement, but with the back up of academic qualifications in case this did not happen.

I followed the apprentice golfers through this programme and over an extended period of time, from recruitment all the way through to graduation from the course and beyond. My

insider view of these multiple journeys allowed me to identify and observe emergent themes and issues. These research themes revolved around: the journey of the golfers through the programme, issues of communities of practice, golf coaching, specialisation and factors which mediated the journey of the participants through the programme.

10.2 Review of research findings

10.2.1 Research question 1 – the journey: expectations, experiences and outcomes

One of the key aims of this work was to understand the expectations of the young golfers on joining the programme, and to trace how these expectations and the anticipated exit routes after the programme developed and were shaped by experiences and critical episodes along the way. It should be noted though that these apprentice golfers were not apprentices in the classical way, learning from a master craftsman, but instead were trainee professional sports people, in a programme designed to "develop and nurture elite athletes" Skills Active (2014c). Should these aspirations to become an elite athlete fall short, AASE offered to "provide for second career development...this includes work within the related field of coaching, sport development, health and fitness and sports leadership" (Skills Active 2014c).

The majority of apprentice golfers began the programme believing that the goal of making it to professional playing ranks was a distinct possibility. The marketing collateral of AASE told them that this was the case and that the education element of their studies would be provided as a back up. The apprentice golfers studied here were similar in outlook to the footballers studied by Parker (1995) and McGillivray (2006); they thought they were likely to succeed and had little comprehension of failure. However, many of the apprentice golfers in this study quickly realised they were not going to succeed. Some of the apprentice golfers

focused on the academic work, becoming 'Scholars', looking for an alternative career, and a number of them subsequently trained to become PGA Golf Professionals. A few are still drawn by the prospect of making it and continue to follow their dream but, given their age and playing standard, this is an increasingly unlikely outcome.

10.2.2 Research question 2 - communities of practice

The cohort of apprentice golfers that started the AASE programme initially appeared to be one group or community who exhibited the shared concern and passion that Wenger (2008) describes. However, as time went by two distinct groups, or communities, of apprentice golfer emerged: 'Players' and 'Scholars'. 'Players' valued the physical capital of sporting performance, whereas 'Scholars' valued the educational elements and cultural capital therein.

During the two years of the programme, 'Players' and 'Scholars' became estranged from each other, moving in different directions and slowly becoming more polarised. These two emergent groups displayed their own shared experience, culture and practice (Lave and Wenger 2006). 'Scholars' concentrated on completing all their academic work and would be prepared to miss golf training to do this; completing course work was lees of a priority for 'Players'. It appeared that neither college staff nor the coaches recognised these two diverse communities and, as such, did not make any effort to cater for their differing needs.

The AASE programme was one that used sporting dreams as a recruitment tool, although reality soon dawned for many of the 'Players'. None of these apprentice golfers progressed to the next stage of the England talent pathway (the England under 18 squad, see appendix 1), which was the intended outcome of the AASE programme. Some gave up realising that they

were not going to succeed and that the competition was too strong. For the 'Scholars', the qualifications offered on the programme did provide them an exit route, most notably to the PGA Training Programme and a Foundation Degree in Professional Golf. So perhaps this was a successful outcome - they had the opportunity to play competitively for longer, did not succeed but still had something to fall back on. A number of 'Players' (Dexter, Gary, Matthew, Simon and Stuart) dropped out of the course, whereas all of the 'Scholars' graduated. This could be in part due to the quality and provision of the golf coaching on offer which many of the 'Players' found did not meet their wants and needs.

10.2.3 Research question 3 - Golf coaching

The organisation and delivery of golf coaching on the programme was highly questionable, appearing to be coach and system-centred rather than based on athlete need as espoused by Jones (2000). Coach recruitment processes were poor and failed to ensure that the coaches had the requisite skills and attributes to deliver quality coaching to the apprentice golfers. There was no coach appraisal process or feedback to the coaches offered by the college or by EGU/EWGA at any time during the two years studied here.

The decision process regarding which coach would work with which apprentice golfer was based on the preferences of the coaches; who they wanted to coach, rather than who they felt better placed to coach. Coaching models were evident throughout and apprentice golfers reported that they thought they were all being taught to play the same way. This is perhaps an example of what Cassidy et al (2006) refer to as 'mindless' coaching and is often manifested in a lack of knowledge and understanding as to how and why athletes learn, and of the complex and dynamic environment over which coaches preside. When challenged, one of the

coaches said that his coaching delivery was based on science, but in fact the coaching being offered was institutionalised, contrary to the EGU/EWGA (2009) statement that coaching within AASE would be individualised and player-centred. This approach to coaching resulted in a negative experience for the majority of apprentice golfers, further reducing their chances of making it in the world of professional golf. Some dropped out of the programme altogether, and some moved from being a 'Player' to be a 'Scholar', and in so doing, gave up on their dreams of becoming a professional player.

10.2.4 Research question 4 - early and late specialisation

Of the group of twenty-four apprentice golfers there was only one individual, Paul, who was an early specialiser as defined by Côté and Hay (2002a) and Côté and Fraser-Thomas (2007). The England talent pathway is a system that, on the face of it, only values early specialisation. It is somewhat surprising, or possibly just an error, that the England talent pathway was supporting an individual who does not even play for England (Paul plays for Wales) thus denying the chance of being on the AASE programme to an English golfer. Within the sport there is encouragement to concentrate on golf only from an early age; there are competition structures and national squad training for under 16s and below. However, many of the best English golfers of the last thirty years were late specialisers, but given the bias against this approach they did not play for their country, region or even county in many cases. On a global basis, many of the world's most successful players specialised late in golf; their peak performance being achieved at around twenty-nine years of age (Colclough 2010). Many of the late specialising apprentice golfers on this programme felt, even at the start of the course, that it was too late for them to make a success of playing golf professionally.

So why did the programme set out to attract late specialisers? The AASE programme was aiming to give late specialisers the chance to be a part of the England talent pathway, an opportunity that was not previously available to them. Entry into AASE did not come from other lower sections of the talent pathway, but was effectively, and literally, a 'bolt-on' to the talent pathway, see appendix 1 (AASE is shown in the green shaded box). Even the positioning of the programme on the talent pathway diagram makes it look like an afterthought. The stated exit route from AASE was into the England under 18s squad, but this was already populated by graduates from the England under 16s squad or from regional under 18s programmes, both of which were filled with early specialisers who naturally possessed current levels of performance and handicap that were better than the AASE apprentices. By this token, the programme and its role within the 'talent pathway', was fatally flawed – there was no viable exit route.

The programme, at best, could be characterised as an opportunity for late specialising apprentice golfers to access coaching and education and, in so doing, up-skill them for the future. At worst this was a scheme that attracted apprentice golfers, falsely raising their expectations that they could make it in the world of competitive golf. In so doing the programme acted as a means for colleges to access funding and for EGU/EWGA to appear that they were supporting the development of talent. The college described in this research secured as many places for apprentice golfers as possible and because recruitment and selection procedures were lax, everybody who wanted a place on the course was offered one.

10.2.5 Research question 5 - Factors medicating golfing journeys

There are innumerable factors that mediate the journey of individuals through sport, and it is clear that this development is not experienced in a linear fashion (Bailey et al, 2010). Four particular themes were explored throughout this study to help understand and depict the journey of these apprentice golfers: 'talent system', 'luck', 'critical episodes' and 'individual outlook', the last of which was the only factor which the apprentice golfers appeared to have any control over.

The AASE programme was an integral part of the England talent pathway and as such was part of the 'talent system'. Apprentice golfers received special treatment at Mid-Town College and were perhaps 'lucky' in this regard. However, it could be said that they were actually 'unlucky' in securing a place on the course as their wants and needs were not met and there were no viable playing exit routes from the programme. It would seem to be a fair assumption that 'talent systems' should recognise, nurture and support talented individuals, however, it must be noted that competitive sport often focuses on winning and the individual interests of the young person are of secondary importance (David 2005). Within this study apprentice golfers were largely late specialisers, within a 'talent system' that values early specialisation and current performance. The realisation that they were not 'lucky', but in fact quite the opposite, was played out in a series of 'critical episodes' that occurred while on the programme, the lack of individualised coaching being a prime example that led to dissatisfaction and in some cases dropout.

In terms of 'talent system' factors, the apprentice golfers had very little control or influence over these; in addition such talent systems are often subjective and judgemental in nature

(Rongen et al 2015) and exacerbate the role of 'luck'. As such, Bailey (2007) suggests that talent identification and talent systems should actively seek to neutralise the role of luck by whatever means they can. Apprentice golfers had a choice to interact with the AASE programme or not and along the way several of the apprentice golfers dropped out. 'Luck' and 'critical episodes' were also largely out of the control of the apprentice golfers, but they were able to exert some control in terms of their actions and 'personal outlook'. Sadly, much of this agency was divested in either drop out from the course, or a realisation that sporting dreams were not going to be fulfilled. While the nature of 'talent systems' generally means that the vast majority of those who seek to make professional ranks do not, the situation in this case was exacerbated by the fact that, due to the lack of a viable playing exit route, these apprentice golfers were bound to fail from the very start.

10.3 Sport and education, the unholy alliance

In an ideal world "young athletes would have a sound environment in which to follow two parallel careers, schooling and sports" (David 2005; 186), however, in the case studied here, it is questionable whether the compromise, the 'unholy alliance', of the disparate entities of sport and education in one programme was ever going to deliver to the needs of these apprentice golfers.

Mark McCormack used the phrase 'unholy alliance' when he was investigating the transformational relationship between the divergent fields of sport and television in the 1960s (McCormack 1984). McCormack first came to prominence in the 1960s when he became agent to the three most prestigious golfers in the world: Arnold Palmer, Jack Nicklaus and Gary Player. These three players dominated the game for two decades (Whannel 1985).

McCormack went on to diversify into others sports (notably tennis) and represented many famous and successful athletes; he was the founder and chairman of International Management Group (IMG) until his death in 2003. As such McCormack was ideally situated to see the effect of television and the associated sponsorship on sport - the commercialisation of the sector (Coakley and Pike 2014). This transformational relationship had a profound impact and meant that sports ideals, as well as organisations and traditions, were compromised. The culture of sport was ultimately transformed; "the traditional benevolent paternalism of sports organisations came under pressure from entrepreneurial interests as the contradiction between sport's financially deprived organisations widened" (Whannel 1985; 130). In the 1960s sports were struggling financially and had to embrace television and sponsorship in order to derive income. Individual sports had to endure significant changes - football abolished the minimum wage in 1960, cricket abolished the demarcation of amateur and professional status and tennis abandoned its amateur only rule (Whannel 1985). The impact of the new-found income from television and sponsorship had a huge effect; traditional organisations that operated with a paternal-benevolent ideology were replaced with "market place principles and the ideology of show business within the rapidly growing leisure industry" (Whannel 1985; 132). As a part of this process, television "foregrounds stars, and in interviews and discussions begins to transform them into celebrities and personalities" (Whannel 1985; 136) as well as boosting their income. Modern athletes' financial rewards could said to be a function of the huge television and sponsorship deals that we now see in UK sport – for example the recent deal between the English Premier League and Sky is reported to be worth £5.14bn (BBC 2015).

The 'unholy alliance' of sport with television and sponsorship that McCormack described has contributed to the current culture of sport; one which sees huge financial reward as well as

the glamourisation of sport and athletes. The apprentice golfers studied here all had ambitions of sporting success at the start of the programme. These sporting dreams were supposedly going to be nurtured and developed by AASE through a programme of sport and education. However, these two entities are quite disparate; Parker (2000b) came to the conclusion that 'education' and 'work' were polarised entities in terms of trainee footballers career choices and that, as a consequence of this, 'dismissive sub-cultural codes' were attached to notions of education and alternative (footballing) career planning. For professional footballers, "their lack of educational cultural capital is revealed in mainstream employment fields where human capital in the form of skills and qualifications prevail" (McGillivray et al 2005). However, in later research, McGillivray (2006), went on to say that, although slow to follow the model of academy education in England and Wales, the Scottish Football Association (in conjunction with government agencies) had combined to deliver a 'Strategy for Lifelong Learning' to address the issue of the lack of transferable skills and qualifications in professional football ranks. This programme was described by McGillivray (2006) in terms of the stages that these professional footballers went through when considering education and future career trajectories. Through the process of raising awareness, contemplation, 'securing active change' and 'maintaining new identities', professional footballers were encouraged to "participate in meaningful learning activities for the duration of their football careers" (McGillivray 2006; 22). However, this scheme was set against a backdrop of government funding and support which may have be uncertain in the longer term. It is also questionable if such a scheme can undo the significant cultural and social challenges that have been detailed in this thesis, in bringing together the polarised entities to which many previous authors have referred. There are many parallels with golf in this regard. For example, changing the culture to one in which education is valued by players, coaches, clubs, governing bodies and all those concerned with the game is a great challenge. However, this assumes that a change from the

current status quo is desirable and necessary. The model of Team Danmark and others in which education is more highly accepted and valued seems to result in other problems and issues mainly focused around the pressure of time on young athletes.

So, could this compromise, of sport and education delivered together, ever achieve its outcomes? Within this study the needs of 'Players' were not met. 'Scholars' may have gained enough educational credits to progress to the PGA Foundation Degree programme, but ultimately, the outcome of the programme, to deliver a stepping-stone for participants as part of the England talent pathway, failed. At best then, this programme was a compromise, and at worst it was an intervention without the best interests of the apprentice golfers at its heart.

10.4 Contribution to knowledge and implications for professional practice

Academic knowledge and understanding is relatively sparse in terms of sporting talent pathways and player development. There are a number of specific areas that are largely under-researched such as: the reasons highly talented individuals drop out and do not 'make it', talent system selection processes and the effectiveness of talent systems in making the most of an individual's potential. In addition, existing research often considers these issues from a 'system' point of view rather than seeking to understand the experiences and attitudes of participants.

In relation to this research, areas where it could make a specific contribution to knowledge and understanding include the issues relating to participant experience, the merits or otherwise of combining sport and education, early and late specialisation, the practical

delivery of golf coaching within a performance environment and the structure and organisation of the England talent system for golf. This study found that the majority of apprentice golfers (twenty-three out of twenty-four) were late specialisers as defined by Côté and Hay (2002a) and Côté and Fraser-Thomas (2007) within a talent system that values early specialisation. This had a critical impact on the effectiveness of the England talent pathway because these apprentice golfers had little or no opportunity to make it to the next stage of the talent pathway and thus the intervention in question, AASE, could not meet its stated outcomes. This type of feedback and information is critical if national lead officers and performance directors are to effectively manage and develop talent pathway interventions in order to support individuals most appropriately and thereby producing better national performances as a result. Golf coaching is often an activity masked by the fact that it is a pursuit involving a coach with a single golfer and thus the method, style and content of delivery is often hidden from those not taking part, including talent pathway managers and coach educators. This study gave an opportunity for golf coaching to be seen at first hand: recording and comparing feedback from the coaches, as well as the participants. It was found that a broadly coach-centred style of delivery was prevalent. This is set against the backdrop of the AASE programmes having been designed and advertised as one that took a player-centred approach. By highlighting the issues concerning developmental journeys, it is hoped that the talent system in England will be better informed in making decisions regarding which golfers to select, how best to support them and how talent systems should be structured.

The knowledge and understanding that this research produced enabled me to act in my professional position in a more informed manner and to implement change. Being responsible for the professional development of around four thousand PGA golf coaches in England as well as managing an intervention with the England talent pathway for golf, put me in a

unique position, one that enabled me to implement new practices and facilitate new approaches in light of the research findings detailed here. During 2010 I took on the responsibility of managing an intervention within the England talent pathway, namely the County Academy Programme (CAP) (for placement of AASE and CAP within the England talent pathway at that time, see appendices 1 and 2). As such I was able to ensure that some of the problems and issues I had identified with the delivery of golf coaching and the structure of talent interventions in AASE were addressed in CAP. For instance, within the CAP, open recruitment of coaches against a job description was insisted upon, thus alleviating the closed recruitment practices I had encountered within AASE. Coach appraisals were also implemented along with fixed term coach contracts and coaches were supported by means of educational events, communities of practice and a national conference. The culture of coaching delivery was also shifted from that of being coach-centred and technical (which I had seen in AASE), to one where participant centred-ness and holistic coaching were implemented and championed. This was achieved by means of: selection of player-centred coaches, coach reviews focussing on meeting the wants and needs of individual players, player feedback to coaches and a coaching framework that was holistic in nature and not simply focussed on technical issues. Participant feedback was constantly sought from CAP golfers so as to provide feedback to coaches, but also to further inform the design and implementation of the programme. In 2013, and as a direct result of the innovations in delivery outlined above, CAP was one of three programmes across all sports shortlisted at the UK Coaching Awards in the category of 'Coaching Intervention of the Year'. The development of CAP and its subsequent national recognition would not have been possible without the experiences and professional development that this course of study afforded me. I hope that many of the developments outlined here will now percolate to other parts of the England talent pathway and in so doing make it more effective and efficient, resulting in

better performances on a world stage as well as meeting the individual needs of all athletes within the pathway.

Distinctively, this thesis sought to paint a picture of participant experience regarding talent pathways and talent development within golf, to investigate the perspectives of apprentice golfers, their expectations, experiences within, and exit routes from, a programme that forms part of the England talent pathway. Ultimately the aim of this thesis was to contribute to a more effective and efficient talent system for golf in England and in particular to aid the development of more supportive environments for individual golfers.

10.5 Implications of the study

The marriage of sport and education is an idealistic hallowed ground that, according to McGillivray (2006) is desirable because it helps governing bodies to develop a structured approach to the significant educational needs of its players; it appreciates that individuals possess different ranges of abilities and competencies. Despite such supposed benefits the AASE college programme has been dropped by EGU/EWGA and has, instead, been adopted by the private sector. These private academies run by coaches and colleges (including the two coaches and college featured in this thesis) are still peddling the utopia of a middle ground in which sport and education can happily coexist. These colleges now charge a significant amount of money to young golfers to access the programme and follow their sporting dreams. Perhaps the most important finding for sporting national governing bodies, colleges and all those who engaged in nurturing talent or running talent development programmes, is that the participant must be central to the design and delivery of the programme (Jones 2000, Mathews et al 2013). It is easy to say that a programme is participant-centred, but much

harder to deliver this. Individuals may want and need different support in a range of areas over time and this presents a significant challenge to the programme developer.

10.6 Limitations of this research

There are of course limitations to this research. From a methodological point of view, this study only looked at twenty-four apprentice golfers in one college. Perhaps it would have been beneficial to mirror this research in the other colleges delivering the AASE course at the same time in order to compare results. In view of this there may be questions over the reliability and validity of the findings. However, the type of qualitative, ethnographic approach used in this research only purports to describe what happened *here,* with *these* participants and therefore cannot be extrapolated to other programmes and colleges.

In terms of the way in which the research proceeded, there could perhaps have been further engagement with the participants' parents to gauge their feelings about the course and its outcomes. There was some contact with parents but this was mainly at the start of the programme. However, it is also possible that more contact with parents may have in some way detrimentally influenced the relationship I had built with the apprentice golfers and could have compromised further engagement and so was purposefully avoided.

10.7 Areas for further research

Since the field work detailed here was completed, there have been a few changes to the way in which AASE operates. Since its peak in 2009-2010 when there were around 200 places across fifteen colleges throughout England, the programme delivered through colleges has

now ceased to exist. Funding is still accessed, but for an 'A' level AASE programme in which individual golfers go to college to continue with their education, but periodically come together with a squad for golf training and playing. 'A' level AASE is aimed at young golfers who are already part of the England talent pathway, rather than the college incarnation into which apprentice golfers were parachuted. As such, 'A' level AASE is no longer targeting the late specialiser; in fact, it supports early specialisers who have already been in regional under 14 and under 16 squads. This means that 'A' level AASE sits as an integral part of the England talent pathway, a pathway in which there is no specific entry point for late specialisers. Also since this field work was undertaken, EGU and EWGA have merged to produce a new body for amateur golf in England, called England Golf, and there is a joined up plan for the development of golf in England (England Golf 2013). As a result the way in which the England talent pathway is organised has evolved (see appendix 2). Further research into the experiences of players within this 'talent system' at all stages, would be of interest as would the decision for golf not to attend to late specialisers specifically - this would seem to limit potential talent pool numbers and ultimately, performance.

10.8 Chapter Conclusion

Sporting academies dazzle young athletes with visions of success and, on the face of it, offer young athletes the chance to follow their dreams of making the sporting 'big time'. The AASE programme studied here promised the opportunity for apprentice golfers to pursue their sporting dreams while at the same time, accessing educational qualifications to serve as a back up if this did not happen. This premise seems to be an entirely logical one; young golfers who abandon education to pursue golf performance as a sole pursuit are often isolated

outside talent systems and if their playing dreams are not fulfilled, they are left with a bleak outlook.

However, this study of the AASE programme found that the alliance of sport and education failed to meet the needs of the apprentice golfers. The programme was designed for, and accessed by, late specialisers who had no means by which to progress to the next stage of the England talent pathway. As such it was fatally flawed and was never going to be able to meet its stated objective of propelling apprentice golfers to the next stage of the pathway and ultimately to professional sporting success.

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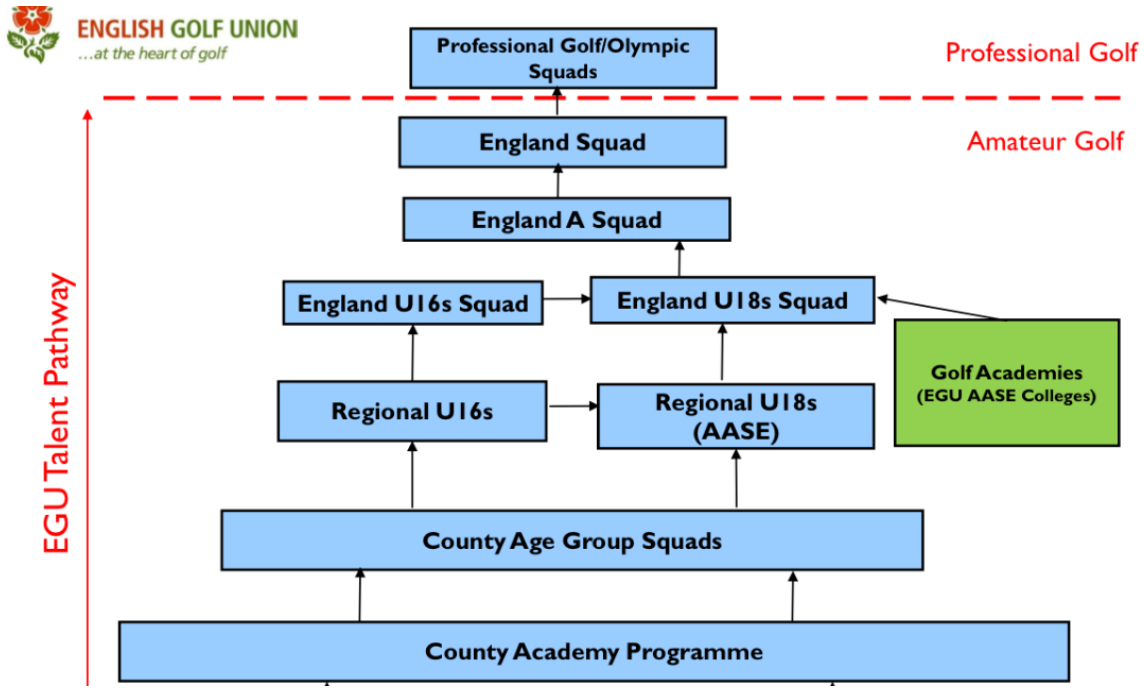
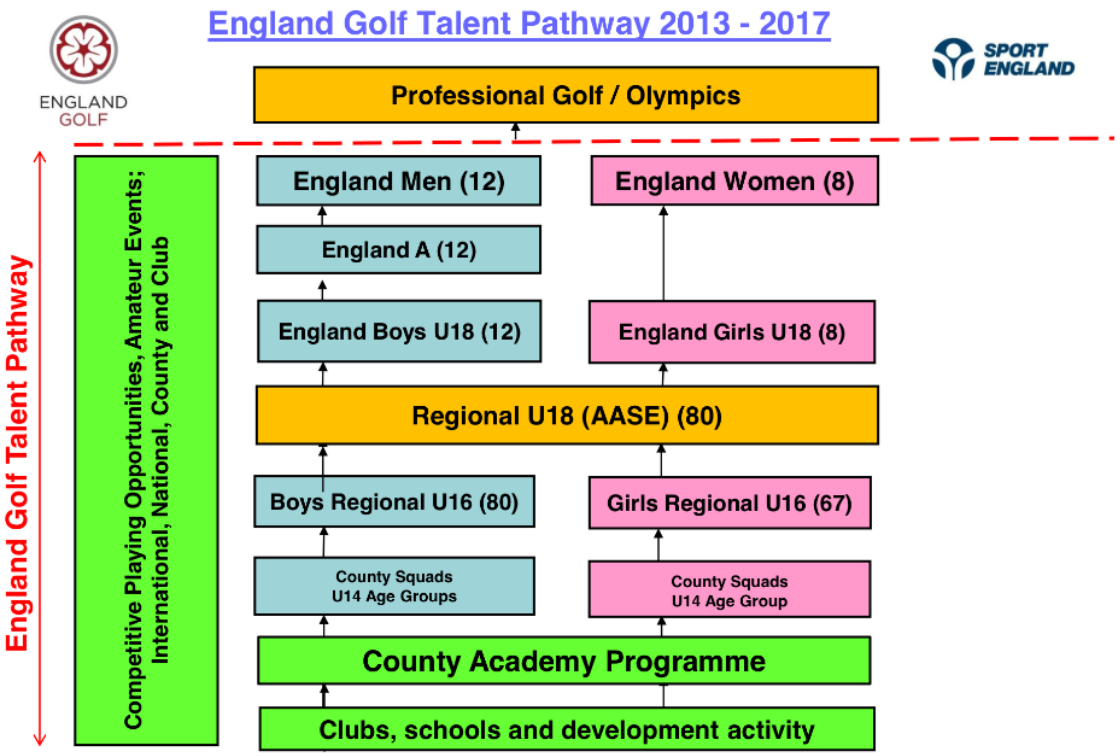
APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – England talent pathway 2009



Appendix 2 – England talent pathway 2013-2017



Appendix 3 – Sample consent form

Jonathan Wright

School of Education, University of Birmingham, Selly Oak, Birmingham B29 6LL

Dear

My name is Jonathan Wright and I am a PhD student from the School of Education at the University of Birmingham. As part of my studies I am undertaking some field research. The purpose of the study is to trying to understand issues around participation and the social aspects involved in golf and coaching in general. It is hoped that these findings will inform golf governing bodies in creating strategies to increase fun, enjoyment and participation in golf. Of particular interest to me is the social interaction of coach and pupil within the context of the golf lesson.

I have spoken to xxxx xxxx at xxxx College who are happy for this research to take place. I would now like to ask your permission for you to be involved in the study. Your input would take place throughout your time and the AASE program. As part of this I may want to conduct informal interviews with you from time to time and make some notes about the issues we talk about. If you agree to be involved I guarantee that your identity, and that of the college, will remain anonymous at all times.

If you have any questions about the study please do contact me. If you are happy to proceed then please tick the below boxes and sign your name at the bottom of the page.

Many thanks for your co-operation and may I wish you every success with your studies and golf!

I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study (tick box) □

I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily (tick box) □

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason (tick box) □

I hereby give permission to be included in the above research project. I am aware that this process may involve observation and interview.

Signed (student)……Signed (parent)……

Name……Name……

Date……..Date……

Appendix 4 – Full list of participants

Adam. An apprentice golfer. Adam was known as 'nudger' because he didn't hit the ball very far (which is a pre requisite for golf performance these days), he just nudged it. He didn't really have the golf game to compete in the AASE group never mind as a playing professional, but loved playing them game and AASE gave him the chance to keep playing and keeping his parents happy with the educational element of the programme.

Alex. The college course leader and the person who draws the whole programme together. Alex was the main gatekeeper for this research and without his help it would not have been possible. Alex spends most of his time at Mid-Town College and delivers some parts of the course. Alex also tries to attend 'golf training' when he can, often challenging the apprentice golfers to 'see who can hit it furthest'. An optimist, full of energy and enthusiasm.

Amanda. An AASE graduate and the current 'poster girl'of the programme. Amanda was already a full international player when she joined the programme and it was quite a coup to get her involved as her inclusion gave gravitas to the programme and college.

Andrew. A PGA Golf Professional and qualified bio-mechanist. Andrew attended golf training a couple of days a year and put the apprentice golfers through their paces with test and exercises. Often a series of stretches and movements would be 'prescribed' to the apprentice golfers. Progress would be measured since their last testing. This element of the course was seen as quite 'sexy' as it spoke of performance and the quality of the performance element and the AASE 'offer'. Andrew is used by the golf talent pathway higher up as well as by players who are 'on Tour'.

Andy. An apprentice golfer.

Billy. One of the two golf coaches who are deployed on the AASE course. A PGA 'Advanced Fellow' Golf Professional (which means he has done a significant amount of professional development). Billy is regarded locally and nationally as a 'good coach'. He specialises in coaching performance players and is a former national academy level coach. Billy believes in golf 'science' and has a distinct personal model of how the golf swing should be performed. Billy was coaching many of the young golfers privately before they enrolled on the programme.

Danny. The national manager of the AASE programme, works for the National Governing bodies EGU/EWGA. Works closely with the Performance Director looking at the England talent pathway.

Darren. A PGA Golf Professional and home coach to one of the apprentice golfers, Dexter.

David. An apprentice golfer.

Dexter. An apprentice golfer. Dexter played his way into the final of the Faldo Series before he began his AASE journey. The Faldo series is a programme of competitions founded by English golfer Sir Nick Faldo, "to give opportunity to young people through golf and to help identify and nurture the next generation of champions" (Faldo Series 2014). Dexter is one of the youngest in the group, just 16 on Trials Day. Dexter wants to make it as a playing professional and his dad liked the educational element of the AASE course as a back up in case this plan did not work out.

Gary. An apprentice golfer. At the beginning of AASE Gary wanted to 'make it to Tour School'. Boyfriend of Julie.

Geoff. A PGA Golf Professional and home coach to one of apprentice golfers,Wes.

George. An apprentice golfer. A hard worker and a dedicated golfer. He was already working with coach Nigel before AASE.

Gordon. An apprentice golfer.

Graham. A PGA Golf Professional and county coach of Wes.

Guy. An apprentice golfer. Guy was as a high-level ice hockey player before injury forced early retirement. He took up golf to kill time when recovering from his ice hockey injury when seeing his dad play.

Hal. An apprentice golfer, a strong player, with lots of potential.

Jake. An apprentice golfer. Had an injury, a back issue, which according to the coaches was brought about by his technically poor golf technique. Jake ignored this for a while, but it got worse and worse to the point where he had to stop playing. According to Billy, his parents are very rich (got a nice car bought for him) and will probably end up working in the family business.

John. An apprentice golfer.

Jude. An apprentice golfer. A talented player, was considered a 'prospect'.

Julie. An apprentice golfer and 'Scholar'. She wants to go to University but is worried that the AASE course would not get her in. Girlfriend of Gary.

Kyle – a 'mind coach'. Like Andrew, Kyle attended golf coaching days twice a year. His input was a mixture of some group session he would run as well as the apprentice golfers having access to him for one-to-one session as well. The take up of these sessions was quite poor and Kyle often left golf training days early as apprentice golfers didn't take up the offer to see him on a one to one basis.

Lisa. An apprentice golfer. Lisa's overriding concern throughout the programme was to get a place at University and 'doing some golf' at the same time seemed like a good idea. Quite an outgoing character and didn't take any nonsense from the misbehaving males, notably Stuart.

Luke. An apprentice golfer. Luke enjoyed fitness element of golf, but later focused on the educational elements of AASE in order to get qualifications and pursue to career in personal training.

Mark. A physiotherapist. Atteneded golf training and was at the disposable of the apprentice golfers, again, like Kyle, uptake of his services was quite poor.

Matthew. An apprentice golfer, dropped out – just went AWOL - in year 1.

Nat. An apprentice golfer.

Ned. A recent AASE graduate who has now come back as a student mentor. Ned achieved excellent grades while on AASE to such a degree that he managed to get a place at University on a course with high academic entry criteria.

Nigel. One of the golf coaches, A PGA Professional. Locally regarded as a good coach of developing golfers. Nigel also runs and stocks a number of golf shop businesses locally.

Paul. An apprentice golfer. Paul was the 'star' golfer of the group, an early specialiser and already a national player (for Wales) when he joined the course. Tired of practice, Paul would 'come alive' when playing. Often other apprentice golfers would watch Paul play and practise to try to find out why he was so good.

Robbie. An apprentice golfer. Robbie was effectively doing the course by 'distance learning', even though it was full time, as had a job as an electrician! Robbie was a couple of years older than the rest of the cohort, 20 yrs old at the start of the course. Robbie and his dad (a 'good golfer') both saw the education element of the course as very important.

Robert. An apprentice golfer. The coaches say of Robert "he has a lot of growing and filling out to do, but he hits it a mile and with the right help through this time of growth could be very good"; fuelled by this feedback, Robert wants to play full time and go to Tour school.

Ross. An apprentice golfer. Friends with Stuart. Poorly behaved in class, well behaved and attentive on golf days.

Shaun. An AASE graduate in the year before the cohort studied here.

Simon. An apprentice golfer. Simon dropped out in year 1, had some 'family issues'.

Stuart. An apprentice golfer, disruptive and temperamental, often causes mayhem on golf days with such antics as hitting golf balls along and inside the golf driving range, a very dangerous activity. Supposedly "talented" and only one of the group known to regional selectors but has no work ethic and seemingly no desire to take golf seriously when he can be bothered, which, seemingly, is hardly ever.

Stephen. One of the tutors of the course at the college, also a PGA Golf Professional. Stephen delivers much of the content of the course at Mid-Town College that includes 'study skills'. Stephen does much of the 'chasing around' to ensure that all work is in on time and that the apprentice golfers complete the course.

Wes. An apprentice golfer. Wes dreams of playing professionally but does realise he needs some education as a back up. Wes has multiple golf coaches, his own coach, county coach, and once on the AASE programme an AASE coach too. He seemed to handle this quite well; his father was a PGA Professional at one time and is the 'sounding board' for Wes and his golf development.